unfoldingWord® Translation Notes

Song of Solomon

Version 85

[en]

Copyrights and Licensing

unfoldingWord® Translation Notes
Date: 2025-03-28
Version: 85
Published by: unfoldingWord

unfoldingWord® Literal Text
Date: 2025-03-28
Version: 85
Published by: unfoldingWord

unfoldingWord® Simplified Text
Date: 2025-03-28
Version: 85
Published by: unfoldingWord

unfoldingWord® Hebrew Bible
Date: 2022-10-11
Version: 2.1.30
Published by: unfoldingWord

unfoldingWord® Greek New Testament
Date: 2023-09-26
Version: 0.34
Published by: unfoldingWord

unfoldingWord® Translation Academy
Date: 2025-03-28
Version: 85
Published by: unfoldingWord®

unfoldingWord® Translation Words
Date: 2025-03-28
Version: 85
Published by: unfoldingWord

unfoldingWord® Translation Words Links
Date: 2025-03-28
Version: 85
Published by: unfoldingWord

unfoldingWord® Translation Notes

Copyright © 2022 by unfoldingWord

This work is made available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/ or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

unfoldingWord® is a registered trademark of unfoldingWord. Use of the unfoldingWord name or logo requires the written permission of unfoldingWord. Under the terms of the CC BY-SA license, you may copy and redistribute this unmodified work as long as you keep the unfoldingWord® trademark intact. If you modify a copy or translate this work, thereby creating a derivative work, you must remove the unfoldingWord® trademark.

On the derivative work, you must indicate what changes you have made and attribute the work as follows: “The original work by unfoldingWord is available from unfoldingword.org/utn”. You must also make your derivative work available under the same license (CC BY-SA).

If you would like to notify unfoldingWord regarding your translation of this work, please contact us at unfoldingword.org/contact/.

Table of Contents

unfoldingWord® Translation Notes **6**
Song of Solomon 6
Introduction to the Song of Songs 7
Song of Solomon 1 10
Song of Solomon 2 29
Song of Solomon 3 50
Song of Solomon 4 63
Song of Solomon 5 81
Song of Solomon 6 100
Song of Solomon 7 114
Song of Solomon 8 131

unfoldingWord® Translation Academy **147**
Abstract Nouns 148
Active or Passive 150
Apostrophe 153
Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information 155
Background Information 158
Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors 161
Biblical Money 164
Collective Nouns 166
Connect — Contrast Relationship 169
Connect — Factual Conditions 171
Connect — Hypothetical Conditions 173
Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship 175
Connecting Words and Phrases 177
Copy or Borrow Words 181
Direct and Indirect Quotations 183
Doublet 185
Ellipsis 187
Euphemism 190
Exclamations 192
Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ 194
First, Second or Third Person 196
Forms of ‘You’ — Singular 198
Generic Noun Phrases 200
Go and Come 202
How to Translate Names 204
Hyperbole 208
Idiom 212
Imperatives — Other Uses 214
Information Structure 217
Metaphor 220
Metonymy 226
Numbers 228
Oath Formulas 231
Parallelism 235
Personification 238
Poetry 240

Possession 244
Pronouns — When to Use Them 248
Quote Markings 250
Reduplication 253
Rhetorical Question 254
Simile 258
Statements — Other Uses 261
Synecdoche 263
Textual Variants 265
Translate Unknowns 267
Unusual Uses of the Plural 270
When Masculine Words Include Women 272
When to Keep Information Implicit 274

Contributors 276
unfoldingWord® Translation Notes Contributors 276
unfoldingWord® Literal Text Contributors 282
unfoldingWord® Simplified Text Contributors 283
unfoldingWord® Translation Academy Contributors 284
unfoldingWord® Translation Words Contributors 284
unfoldingWord® Translation Words Links Contributors 285

unfoldingWord® Translation Notes

Song of Solomon

Introduction to the Song of Songs

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Song of Songs

The title of the book (1:1)
The woman longs for the man she loves (1:2–1:7)
The man responds to the woman he loves (1:8–1:11)
The woman speaks to herself (1:12-1:14)
The man praises the woman he loves (1:15)
The woman responds to the man she loves (1:16-2:1)
The man responds to what the woman said in 2:1 (2:2)
The woman speaks to the man she loves, herself, and the women of Jerusalem (2:3-3:11)
The man praises the woman he loves (4:1-4:11)
The garden metaphor (4:12-5:1)
The woman and the women of Jerusalem speak to each other (5:2–6:1)
The woman speaks to herself (6:2-6:3)
The man praises the woman he loves (6:4-10)
The man goes to the walnut-tree orchard and imagines he is among chariots (6:11-6:12)
The women of Jerusalem speak to the woman, and the man replies to them (6:13)
The man praises the woman he loves and expresses his desire to be intimate with her (7:1-9a)
The woman responds to the man she loves (7:9b-8:3)
The woman speaks to the women of Jerusalem (8:4)
The women of Jerusalem see the woman and man coming from the wilderness (8:5a)
The woman expresses her thoughts on their love to the man she loves (8:5b-7)
The woman's brothers speak about their sister (8:8-9)
The woman responds to her brothers (8:10-12)
The man and the woman speak their concluding thoughts to each other (8:13–14)

There are different views among biblical scholars regarding how this book is structured and, therefore, how it should be outlined. The outline above offers one possible way of outlining this book.

What is the Song of Songs about?

The Song of Songs is a poem or a series of poems that celebrate love and intimacy between a man and a woman. Jews traditionally have interpreted the book as a picture of God's love for his people Israel. Until the 1800's the main view among Christians was that this book is primarily a picture of the love between Christ and his bride, the Church. Since the 1800's the more common view has been that it is a poem or a series of poems that give a beautiful picture of love between a man and a woman. Many Christians also think that, even though the main meaning of this poem is to give a beautiful portrayal of romantic love between a man and a woman, this book also contains lessons about God's love for his bride, the Church.

Who wrote the Song of Songs?

The first verse of the book ("The Song of Songs, which is of Solomon") gives the idea that King Solomon of Israel wrote it. However, there are several possible ways to interpret the meaning of this title. A translation note for this verse discusses the possible meanings.

How should the title of this book be translated?

This book is traditionally titled “Song of Songs,” which means the very best song, or “Song of Solomon.” It may also be called “Songs of Love,” “Great Poems of Love,” or “The Love Songs of Solomon.” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.204)**)

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What place do the descriptions of sexual behavior have in the Song of Songs?

The Song of Songs approves of sexual behavior which expresses love between a husband and his wife.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

How many characters are in the Song of Songs?

The two main characters in this book are the man and the woman, two people who love each other. In 8:8-9 the woman’s brothers speak among themselves. In different places throughout the book, a group of women called the “daughters of Jerusalem” speak or are spoken to. However, it is possible that the group of women is not real but imagined. They may have been written into the poem for poetic effect.

Some interpreters believe there may be more characters than these, but this is not certain. The ULT and UST versions recognize only the man, the woman, the group of women (and possibly a group of friends in some parts), and the woman’s brothers.

What are the lines in the UST about people speaking?

The Song of Songs is a poem that shows the words and thoughts of a man, a woman, the woman’s friends, and the woman’s brothers. Throughout the poem, the author does not identify the speakers and their audience. To help readers understand the poem, some translations attempt to identify the speaker and the audience. Since it is not always certain who is speaking, translations sometimes disagree about the identity of the speaker.

The UST places a header before each speech to identify the speaker and the audience. For example: “The woman speaking to the women of Jerusalem,” “The woman speaking to the man,” “The man speaking to the woman,” or “The woman speaking to herself.” Translators are encouraged to include these ways of identifying the speaker and the audience. Be careful to format them differently from the scripture text. The translators should also include an initial note to their readers indicating that these explanations are not part of the scripture text.

There are different views among Bible scholars about who the man is—a shepherd boy or King Solomon. Some think that both speak at various times in this book and compete for the woman’s love. The headers in the UST indicate when a man is speaking or being spoken to, as in “The man speaking to the woman he loves” and “The woman speaking to the man she loves.” The headers do not indicate the identity of the man.

How should one translate the Song of Songs if the readers would view certain terms as coarse, vulgar, or improper?

Readers might consider many images or forms in the Song of Songs as socially improper when translated. Whenever possible, the translator should try to avoid offensive language by using expressions that will not cause offense. (See: **Euphemism (p.190)**)

How do I translate metaphors and similes in this book?

Because the author uses images throughout this book to express things in a beautiful and captivating way, it is recommended that you maintain these images or select images from your culture and language that communicate the same concepts.

The many metaphors and similes in this book are used to add poetic beauty and emotional effect; however, their meaning is sometimes unclear. Sometimes the reader does not know whether a sexual meaning is intended. At times the wording carries both a literal and a sexual meaning. However, though meanings are often unclear, it is not always necessary to clarify the meaning; often ambiguity in translation is best. You could translate the words as they are written to avoid committing to a specific meaning. (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

Translating terms of endearment

The word which the ULT translates as “my beloved” occurs 26 times in this book. Each time it occurs the woman uses it to refer to the man she loves. You should translate this term consistently throughout this book. The word which the ULT translates as “my darling” appears nine times in this book. Each time it occurs the man uses it to refer to the woman he loves. Be sure to translate this term consistently throughout the book.

Song of Solomon 1

Song of Songs 1 General Notes

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Metaphors

In the ancient Near East, it was common to describe a woman by using metaphors involving animals. In many cultures today, such metaphors could be considered offensive. Cultures vary in the metaphors of beauty they use to describe women. (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

The lines indicating who is speaking and who is being spoken to

Throughout the poem, the author does not identify the speakers or their audience. To help readers understand the poem, some translations attempt to identify the speaker and the audience. It is not always certain who the speaker is, so sometimes translations disagree about the identity of the speaker. Before each speech, the UST places a header to identify the speaker and the audience. You may wish to do the same in your translation.

“I am black”

In the ancient Near East, wealthy people usually had lighter skin because they did not need to work outside, where the sun darkened their skin. Because this young woman had to work outside in the sun, her skin became dark. This is why she says “I am black” in 1:5-6.

Song of Solomon 1:1

The Song of Songs, which {is} of Solomon

This verse is the title of this book. Use whatever formatting convention is most natural in your language for indicating the title of a poem or song. The ULT places this line further to the left than the other lines in this book to indicate that this verse is the title. (See: **Poetry (p.240)**)

The Song of Songs

The possessive form in **Song of Songs** is used here to indicate a comparison with other **Songs** and to show that this **Song** is the best or greatest of all songs. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use another form to indicate this. Alternate translation: [The best song] or [The most excellent song] or [The greatest song] (See: **Possession (p.244)**)

is} of Solomon

The phrase **of Solomon** could mean: (1) Solomon wrote this song. Alternate translation: [Solomon wrote] (2) this song was dedicated to Solomon. Alternate translation: [is dedicated to Solomon] (3) this song was about Solomon. Alternate translation: [is about Solomon] (See: **Possession (p.244)**)

Song of Solomon 1:2

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth

Here, **kiss me with the kisses of his mouth** is an emphatic construction that uses a verb and its object that come from the same root. You may be able to use the same construction in your language to express the meaning here. Alternatively, your language may have another way of showing the emphasis. Alternate translation: [Let him kiss me again and again with the kisses of his mouth] or [Let him cover my face with the kisses of his mouth] or [I wish he would kiss me passionately with his mouth] (See: **Poetry (p.240)**)

your love

In this book every occurrence of the words **you** and **your** is singular. Your language may require you to mark these forms. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.198)**)

better {is} your love than wine

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **love**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [the way you love me is better than wine] or [your loving is better than wine] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.148)**)

better {is} your love than wine

Alternate translation: [I enjoy your love more than I enjoy drinking wine] or [your love is more pleasant than wine]

יִשָּׁקֵ נִי מִנְּשִׁיק וֹת פִּ יהוּ כִּי־טוֹבִ ים דֹּדֶ יךָ מִיָּיִן: לְרֵ יחַ שְׁמָנֶ יךָ טוֹבִ ים שֶׁ מֶן תּוּרַ ק שְׁמֶ ךָ
עַל־כֵּ ן עֲלָמ וֹת אֲהֵבוּךָ: מָשְׁכֵ נִי אַחֲרֶ יךָ נָּר וּצָה הֱבִיאַ נִי הַמֶּ לֶךְ חֲדָרָ יו

These lines of poetry most likely indicate internal words or thoughts, things that the woman is thinking while she is alone. Your language may have a way of indicating speech that is expressed toward a person who is not present to hear what is being said. If your language has a way to indicate that, you could use it here. (See: **Poetry (p.240)**)

Song of Solomon 1:3

As for the scent of

The Hebrew word which the ULT translates as **As for** could: (1) indicate reference, in which case it should be translated with an equivalent phrase or as the ULT translates it. Alternate translation: [In reference to the scent of] (2) indicate emphasis or be making an assertion. Alternate translation: [Truly, the scent of] or [Indeed, the scent of]

your oils—{they are} good

Here, **oils** refers to colognes or perfumes. The author is assuming the reader knows that pleasant-smelling spices were mixed into olive oil in order to make a pleasant-smelling perfume, which was then applied to the skin. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. If men do not put pleasant-smelling things on their skin in your culture, you could say that the scent of the man being spoken of here is pleasant. Alternate translation: [your colognes—they are good] or [your scented oils—they are good] or [your skin—it is good] or [your body—it is good] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

oil poured out {is} your name

Here, **your name** represents her beloved's reputation. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [oil poured out is your reputation] or [your name is pleasant like good perfume is pleasant] (See: **Metonymy (p.226)**)

oil poured out {is} your name

The woman makes a comparison between the man's reputation (which she refers to as his **name**) and scented oil that is poured out, after which the good smell of the oil spreads as the air moves. If it would be helpful in your language, you could explain the comparison. Alternate translation: [your reputation spreads like the fragrance of scented oil spreads after it has been poured out] or [your reputation spreads like the scent of perfumed oil after it has been poured out] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

Therefore

The Hebrew words translated as **Therefore** indicate that what follows is a result of what came before. Use a connector in your language that makes it clear that what follows is a result of what came before. Alternate translation: [As a result] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.175)**)

marriageable women

Here, **marriageable women** refers to young women who are old enough to be married or who have been recently married but not yet given birth to a child. Your language may have a term for women during this stage of life that you could use here, or you could use a more general term. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

Song of Solomon 1:4

Draw me

Alternate translation: [Lead me]

let us run

The word **us** refers to the young woman and the man that she is addressing, so use the inclusive form of that word if your language marks that distinction. Alternate translation: [let you and me run] (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.194)**)

let us run

Here the woman uses **run** as a poetic way of expressing her desire that she and the man she loves should quickly go away together. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [let us hurry] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

The king

Here the woman is speaking affectionately of the man she loves as if he were **The king**. She is not speaking of an actual king but using the word as a term of endearment. She is still speaking of the same man that she was speaking of in 1:2-3. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [He whom I love is like a king to me and] or [He who is like a king to me] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

The king has brought me

The original language word which the ULT translates as **The king has brought me** could be describing: (1) a request or wish that the woman has. Alternate translation: [May the king bring me] (2) an action that has already happened. Alternate translation: [The king brought me] (See: **Statements — Other Uses (p.261)**)

has brought me

Your language may say "taken" rather than **brought** in a context such as this. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: [has taken me] (See: **Go and Come (p.202)**)

Let us be glad and rejoice in you. Let us profess your love more than wine

The **us** in these two lines could be: (1)a group of young women speaking about the man. Alternate translation: [We will be glad and rejoice in you. We will profess your love more than wine] (2) the woman continuing to speak to the man she loves and using **us** to refer to herself. Alternate translation: [May I be glad and rejoice in you. May I profess your love more than wine] (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.194)**)

let us run. & Let us be glad & Let us profess

The word **us** is inclusive all three times that it occurs in this verse. Use the inclusive form of this word if your language marks that distinction. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.194)**)

Let us be glad and rejoice

The terms **be glad** and **rejoice** mean similar things. The author is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: [Let us greatly rejoice] or [Let us rejoice greatly] (See: **Doublet (p.185)**)

Let us profess

Alternate translation: [Let us proclaim]

more than wine

The phrase **more than wine** could mean: (1) that the women would profess that the man's love was more delightful than wine. Alternate translation: [as being more delightful than wine] (2) that the women would profess the delightfulness of the man's love more often than they would profess the delightfulness of wine. Alternate translation: [more often than we profess wine]

your love more than wine

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **love**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [that the way you love is better than wine] or [that the way you love me is better than wine] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.148)**)

rightly do they love you

Here the speaker could be: (1) the woman speaking to the man about the young women who admire him. Alternate translation: [rightly do the young women love you] (2) the young women speaking of other women who admire the man. Alternate translation: [rightly do the other young women love you]. You may wish to indicate who the presumed speaker is here by placing a heading above this section, as modeled by the UST.

rightly do they love you

Alternate translation: [it is right that other young women adore you] or [no wonder other young women adore you]

Song of Solomon 1:5

I {am} black

Solomon assumes that his readers will understand that here, **I am black** means “my skin is black” or “my skin is very dark.” If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [My skin is black] or [My skin is very dark] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

but lovely

Here the word **but** is introducing a contrast between what was expected and what follows. In the author’s culture, it was not considered attractive for a woman to have skin darkened by the sun. Use a natural form in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: [yet lovely] or [but still lovely] (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.169)**)

daughters of Jerusalem

The woman is using the possessive form to poetically describe where the young women (**daughters of Jerusalem**) live. The phrase refers to the young women from Jerusalem; probably the same women as the “marriageable women” in 1:3 and “they” in 1:4). If your language would not use the possessive form for this, you could indicate the association between them in a way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [daughters from Jerusalem] or [young women from Jerusalem] (See: **Possession (p.244)**)

like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon

The **Kedar** people group used black goat skins to make their **tents**. The woman is comparing her skin to these tents. The phrase **the curtains of Solomon** refers to the beautiful curtains in Solomon’s palace. The point of the first comparison is that the woman’s skin was **black**. The second indicates that the woman was also **lovely**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use equivalent comparisons from your culture, or you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [like the dark tents of the Kedar people, like the curtains of Solomon’s palace] or [as dark as the tents of Kedar, as beautiful as the curtains in Solomon’s palace] (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

Song of Solomon 1:6

Do not look at me, that I {am} black

The phrase **Do not look at me** could mean: (1) the woman does not want people to look at her with contempt. Alternate translation: [Do not look at me with contempt, that I am black] or [Do not look at me disapprovingly, that I am black] (2) the woman does not want people to stare at her in admiration of her beauty. Alternate translation: [Do not stare at my beauty, that I am black]

that I

The word **that** indicates that what follows is a reason for what came before. Use a connector in your language that makes it clear that what follows is a reason for what came before. Alternate translation: [because I] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.175)**)

that I {am} black

Solomon assumes that his readers will understand that here, **I am black** means “my skin is black” or “my skin is very dark,” as it did in 1:5. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [that my skin is black] or [that my skin is very dark] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

that the sun scorched me

The word **that** indicates that what follows is a reason for what came before. Use a connector in your language that makes it clear that what follows is a reason for what came before. Alternate translation: [because the sun scorched me] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.175)**)

that the sun scorched me

The author assumes that his readers will understand that **the sun scorched me** means “the sun made my skin color turn very dark.” You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [that the sun darkened my skin] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

as} keeper of the vineyards— my vineyard that {is} mine I have not kept

Alternate translation: [as caretaker of the vineyards— I have not taken care of my own vineyard]

my vineyard that {is} mine I have not kept

The woman is probably using the phrase **my vineyard** to refer to her skin. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [my skin I have not protected from the sun] or [I have not protected my complexion from the sun] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

Song of Solomon 1:7

you} whom my soul loves

The woman is using one part of herself, her **soul**, to represent all of her. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [you, the man whom I love] (See: **Synecdoche (p.263)**)

where do you graze

The woman is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need to be complete. You could supply these words from the context if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [where do you graze your flock] or [where do you graze your sheep] (See: **Ellipsis (p.187)**)

For why should I be like a woman who covers herself beside the flocks of your companions

Here the woman is not asking for information but is using the question form for emphasis. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate her words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [I do not want to be like a woman who covers herself beside the flocks of your companions] or [Tell me so that I will not be like a woman who covers herself beside the flocks of your companions] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.254)**)

like a woman who covers herself beside the flocks of your companions

The author assumes that his readers will understand that **covers herself** means “covers herself with a veil.” The phrase **your companions** refers to the other shepherds who pastured their animals near the flocks of the man; they were probably his friends. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [like a woman who covers herself with a veil beside the flocks of the other shepherds] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

For why should I be like a woman who covers herself beside the flocks of your companions

The woman does not want to look **like a woman who covers herself** because in her culture, prostitutes often covered their faces with a veil so that people would not recognize them. She did not want to be mistaken for a prostitute while attempting to find him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [For why should I be like a prostitute who covers herself with a veil and wanders around among the flocks of your companions] (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

Song of Solomon 1:8

If you do not know, most beautiful among women, go out

If it would help your readers to see that this is a conditional statement, you could supply a word like “then” in your translation. Alternate translation: [If you do not know, most beautiful among women, then go out] (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.173)**)

If you do not know, most beautiful among women

If it would be more natural in your language, you could begin this verse with the phrase **most beautiful among women**. Alternate translation: [Most beautiful among women, if you do not know] (See: **Information Structure (p. 217)**)

go out

Your language may say “come” rather than **go** in contexts such as these. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: [come out] (See: **Go and Come (p.202)**)

and pasture your young goats

Alternate translation: [and let your young goats graze] or [and let your young goats eat]

Song of Solomon 1:9

To a mare among the chariots of Pharaoh I liken you, my darling

If it would be more natural in your language, you could begin this verse with the phrase **my darling**. Alternate translation: [My darling, I liken you to a mare among the chariots of Pharaoh] (See: **Information Structure (p.217)**)

To a mare among the chariots of Pharaoh I liken you

The comparison **To a mare among the chariots of Pharaoh I liken you** could be: (1) the man saying that the excitement caused by a mare (a female horse) among Pharaoh's male chariot horses is like the excitement that the woman caused him to feel. (2) the man saying that the beauty of the woman is like the beauty of one of Pharaoh's mares. The horses of the king of Egypt, the Pharaoh, were known to be the best in the world and very beautiful. This is the second option because, normally, only stallions, not mares, pulled the chariots. Alternate translation: [Your beauty is like the beauty of Pharaoh's chariot horses] or [I compare your beauty to the beauty of Pharaoh's chariot horses] (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

among the chariots of Pharaoh

Here, **the chariots** represents "the horses that pull the chariots." Chariots were normally drawn by pairs of male horses (stallions). If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [among the stallions that pull Pharaoh's chariots] or [among the stallions that pull the chariots of Pharaoh] (See: **Metonymy (p.226)**)

Pharaoh

The word **Pharaoh** is a title and represents kings of Egypt in general, not one particular king of Egypt. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a more natural expression. Alternate translation: [the king of Egypt] (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.200)**)

Song of Solomon 1:10

with earrings

The term which the ULT translates as **earrings** refers to strings of small ornaments or jewels which hung down the side of one's face from the ears. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of jewelry, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term and put an explanation in a footnote. Alternate translation: [with neck ornaments] or [with strings of jewels] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p. 267)**)

with necklaces

Here, **necklaces** are a type of jewelry worn around the neck to make a person look more attractive. If your readers would not be familiar with necklaces, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term and make a footnote to explain what a necklace is. Alternate translation: [with neck ornaments] or [with strings of jewels] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

Song of Solomon 1:11

Earrings of

See how you translated the term **Earrings** in the previous verse. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

Earrings of gold we will make for you

By **we**, the writer could mean: (1) that the man will have someone make the **Earrings of gold** for her. The man is not including the woman, so use the exclusive form of this word if your language marks that distinction. Alternate translation: [Earrings of gold I will have someone make for you] or [I will pay someone to make earrings of gold for you] (2) that though the man is using a plural form, he expects the woman to understand that he means "I." Alternate translation: [Earrings of gold I will make for you] (3) that a group of people, and not the man, speak here. If you are using section headers, you can place a header above this section to indicate who you think is speaking. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.194)**)

with studs of silver

Alternate translation: [with beads of silver] or [that are decorated with silver]

Song of Solomon 1:12

the king

See how you translated the phrase **the king** in 1:4 where it is used with the same meaning. (See: **Metaphor (p. 220)**)

was} on his couch

The word which the ULT translates as **couch** could: (1) refer to a couch, which is a long upholstered piece of furniture. (2) refer to a table. Alternate translation: [was at his table] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

my nard

The term **nard** refers to pleasant-smelling, perfumed oil that was made from the roots of the nard plant. If your readers would not be familiar with nard plants, you could use a general expression or describe what nard is. Alternate translation: [my perfumed oil] or [my pleasant-smelling perfume made from the nard plant] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

gave off its scent

Alternate translation: [gave off its good odor] or [spread its pleasant aroma]

Song of Solomon 1:13

A bundle of myrrh {is} my beloved to me; between my breasts it stays

In the author's culture, women sometimes wore a small bag or pouch of myrrh on a necklace so they could enjoy its pleasant fragrance. The woman makes a comparison between that enjoyable experience and that of having the man she loves near her. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [I enjoy having my beloved near me throughout the night just like I enjoy the fragrance of a bag of myrrh] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

myrrh

Here, **myrrh** is a pleasant-smelling incense made from resin obtained from the bark of a certain kind of tree. If your readers would not be familiar with myrrh, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [pleasant-smelling perfume] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p. 267)**)

is} my beloved

Alternate translation: [is my lover]

A bundle of myrrh {is} my beloved to me; between my breasts it stays

If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a polite way of referring to **breasts**, or state the meaning of the phrase **between my breasts it stays** by using a more general expression. Alternate translation: [My beloved stays very close to me during the night, like a bundle of myrrh around my neck] (See: **Euphemism (p.190)**)

it stays

Here the original language word that the ULT translates **it stays** is ambiguous regarding what it is that stays. This word could: (1) indicate that the **bundle of myrrh** is what stays. Alternate translation: [the bundle of myrrh stays] (2) mean that the man does not leave that location throughout the night. Alternate translation: [he lingers] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.248)**)

Song of Solomon 1:14

henna blossoms

The phrase **henna blossoms** refers to pleasant-smelling blossoms from the henna plant. If your readers would not be familiar with this plant, you could use the name of a fragrant plant in your area, you could describe the henna plant, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [fragrant flowers] or [fragrant blossoms from the henna plant] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

A cluster of henna blossoms {is} my beloved to me, in the vineyards of Engedi

Here the phrase **the vineyards of Engedi** refers to one of the most beautiful places in Israel, and the henna blossoms there were famous for their exquisite fragrance. In this verse, the woman makes a comparison between the pleasurable experience of the vineyards and her enjoyment of having the man she loves near to her. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [The presence of my lover gives me feelings of pleasure] or [I delight in my beloved being near me like I delight in the smell of the henna flowers in the vineyards of En Gedi] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

Song of Solomon 1:15

Behold you, & Behold you

The man is using the term **Behold** to focus the woman's attention on what he is about to say. Your language may have a comparable expression that you can use in your translation. Alternate translation: [Look at you! ... Look at you!] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

Behold you, beautiful, my darling! Behold you, beautiful! Your eyes {are} doves

The man uses the phrase **Behold you, beautiful** two times for emphasis. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine the phrases and express emphasis in a way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [Behold you, beautiful, my darling! Your eyes are doves] (See: **Parallelism (p.235)**)

my darling

See how you translated the phrase **my darling** in 1:9

Your eyes {are} doves

Here the man is speaking of the woman's **eyes** as if they were **doves**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Your eyes are like doves] or [Your eyes are gentle and beautiful] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

Song of Solomon 1:16

Behold you

The woman is using the term **Behold** to focus the man's attention on what she is about to say. Your language may have a comparable expression that you could use in your translation. Alternate translation: [Look at you] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

Behold you! {You are} handsome, my beloved, truly pleasant. Indeed, our couch is leafy

If it would be more natural in your language, you could either begin or end this verse with the phrase **my beloved**. Alternate translation: [My beloved, behold you! You are handsome, truly pleasant. Indeed, our couch is leafy] (See: **Information Structure (p.217)**)

my beloved

See how you translated the phrase **my beloved** in 1:13. Alternate translation: [my lover]

my beloved, truly pleasant

The woman is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need to be complete. You could supply these words from the context if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [my beloved. You are truly pleasant] (See: **Ellipsis (p.187)**)

our couch is

Here, **couch** refers to the place where the couple would lie down in the forest. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the place where we lie down is] or [the place on which we lie down like a bed is] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

leafy

Here the word that the ULT translates as **leafy** could be translated in a general way such as "green," or you could indicate a more specific meaning. Here, **leafy** could refer to: (1) the grass that the couple lay down on. Alternate translation: [grass] (2) the branches above their meeting place in the forest. Alternate translation: [under the cover of branches] or [shaded by branches]. The author assumes that readers will understand that it is not a literal couch. You could include this information if it would be helpful to your readers. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

Song of Solomon 1:17

The beams of our house {are} cedars; our rafters {are} pine

Here the woman is speaking of the forest as if it were a **house**, the cedar trees as if they were the **beams** of the house, and the **pine** trees as if they were the **rafters** of the house. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Our meeting place is shaded by cedar and pine trees] or [Branches of cedar and pine trees will be a canopy over our meeting place] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

are} pine

The Hebrew word that the ULT translates as **pine** refers to a tall evergreen tree that is either a fir or a pine. This tree would provide a dense covering that would act like the **rafters** of a roof. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of tree, you could use the name of a similar tree in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [are tall leafy trees] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

Song of Solomon 2

Song of Songs 2 General Notes

Translation Issues in This Chapter

The woman and man compliment each other by using metaphors and similes

In 2:1 the woman uses a metaphor to tell the man she loves that she thinks she is common, like a flower that grows on the plains or a lily that grows in the valleys. The man responds in 2:2 by using a simile to tell her how special she is when compared to other women. She then uses a simile in 2:3 to tell him how special he is compared to other men. When translating these verses, pay close attention to the translation notes and the UST in order to understand the meaning.

Chiasm

Hebrew poetry sometimes uses a literary device called a “chiasm” (sometimes called “chiasmus”). A chiasm is when words or phrases are ordered in an AB-BA sequence. In Song of Songs 2:14](../02/14.md) the author uses a chiasm. The ULT follows the Hebrew order and translates this verse as “show me your appearance, make me hear your voice, for your voice {is} sweet, and your appearance {is} lovely.” Notice that the phrases “your appearance” and “your voice” are repeated in an AB-BA sequence: “your appearance … your voice … your voice … your appearance.”

Song of Solomon 2:1

I {am} a wildflower of Sharon, a lily of the valleys

Here the woman is speaking of herself as if she is a type of wildflower. She compares herself to these common wildflowers to express that she thinks she is no more attractive than other young women. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [I am as common as a wildflower of Sharon or a lily of the valleys] or [My beauty is as common as a wildflower of Sharon or a lily of the valleys] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

am} a wildflower of

The original word which the ULT translates as **wildflower** refers to a specific type of flower which grows on the ground. The exact type of flower that the original word refers to cannot be known with certainty, so you could use the name of a pretty wildflower in your area, or you could use a more general term. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p. 267)**)

I {am} a wildflower of Sharon

The writer assumes that the reader will know that **Sharon** was the name of a specific plain (a flat area) and that the word itself refers to a flat, wide area. Here the woman is probably referring to “plains” in general and expressing that she is like a wildflower that grows on the plains. You could include this information if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [I am a flower that grows on the plain of Sharon] or [I am a flower that grows on the plains] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

I {am} a wildflower of Sharon, a lily of the valleys

These two phrases **a flower of Sharon** and **a lily of the valleys** mean basically the same thing. The second phrase emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words. Hebrew poetry was based on this kind of repetition, and it would be good to show this to your readers by including both phrases in your translation rather than combining them. However, if it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine the phrases into one. Alternate translation: [I am a wildflower that grows in the plains and the valleys] (See: **Parallelism (p.235)**)

a lily of

The woman is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. If it would be clearer in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: [I am a lily of] (See: **Ellipsis (p.187)**)

a lily of

The Hebrew word that the ULT translates as **lily** is a type of flower which grows as a wildflower. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of flower, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [a wildflower of] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

Song of Solomon 2:2

Like a lily among thorns, so {is} my darling among the daughters

The man is saying that the woman he loves is **like a lily among thorns**. The idea is that just as a lily is much more beautiful than thorns, so the woman he loves is much more beautiful than the other young women. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: [You, my darling, are much more beautiful than all other women] (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

Like a lily

See how you translated the word **lily** in 2:1. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

is} my darling

See how you translated the phrase **my darling** in 1:9.

the daughters

The writer assumes that the readers will understand that **the daughters** refers to the “daughters of Jerusalem” mentioned in 1:5. The phrase probably also refers to all women. You could include this information if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [the young women of Jerusalem] or [the other young women] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

Song of Solomon 2:3

Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest, so {is} my beloved among the sons

The woman is saying that the man is like an **apple tree** because, in the same way that **an apple tree** is more pleasant than the other **trees of the forest**, so the man she loves is more pleasant than other men. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [As apple trees are more pleasant than other trees, so you, my beloved, are more pleasant than other men] or [As apple trees are more delightful than other trees, so you, my beloved, are more delightful than other men] (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest, so {is} my beloved among the sons

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases. Alternate translation: [Among the other young men, my beloved is like an apple tree among the trees of the forest] or [Compared to other men, my beloved is like an apple tree among the trees of the forest] (See: **Information Structure (p.217)**)

Like an apple tree

An **apple tree** is a tree that produces apples, a round, pleasant-tasting fruit. Bible scholars are not certain that the word the ULT translates as **apple** refers to what we now call an apple. It could refer to an apricot or another type of fruit. If your readers would not be familiar with these types of trees, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [Like a tree that produces pleasant tasting fruit] or [Like an apricot tree] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

among the trees of the forest

The writer assumes that the reader will understand that **the trees of the forest** refers to the other trees of the forest, those which were considered common when compared to the beautiful, fruit-bearing **apple tree**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [among the other trees of the forest] or [compared to the common trees of the forest] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 155)**)

is} my beloved

See how you translated the phrase **my beloved** in 1:13.

among the sons

Here the writer assumes that the reader will know that **the sons** refers to the other young men. In the previous verse the man compared the woman to the other “daughters”. Here the woman compares the man she loves to the other young men, whom she calls **sons**. You could include this information if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [among the other young men] or [when compared to all the other men] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

In his shadow I greatly delighted, and I sat, and his fruit {is} sweet to my palate

Here the woman continues speaking of the man as if he were **an apple tree**. The word **shadow** refers to the shade of the apple tree which gives protection from the sun. **I sat** represents being near or in the presence of the man. Here the woman speaks of her pleasurable feelings as if they were **his fruit** which is **sweet to my palate**. If it is possible in your language, you should try to retain the images used here or substitute a comparable image. However, if it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [He provides me with refreshment and protection when I am in his presence; he gives me great pleasure] or [I sit in his presence, and he refreshes and protects me. Like sweet fruit, he is delightful to me] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

In his shadow I greatly delighted, and I sat

Alternate translation: [In his shade I took delight, and I sat]

Song of Solomon 2:4

He brought me

See how you translated the phrase “has brought me” in 1:4. The original language word which the ULT translates here as **He brought me** could be describing: (1) a request or wish that the woman has and not something that has already happened. Alternate translation: [May he bring me] or [I desire him to bring me] (2) an action that has already happened. Alternate translation: [He has brought me] (See: **Statements — Other Uses (p.261)**)

He brought me

Your language might say “took” rather than **brought** in a context such as this. Alternate translation: [He took me] (See: **Go and Come (p.202)**)

the house of wine

The writer assumes that the reader will understand that the phrase **house of wine** refers to a location to which people went to drink wine. The phrase does not necessarily mean a house, so here it could be referring to the private location that the couple used as their meeting place, (described in 1:17). You could include this information if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [the place where wine is drunk] or [the place where wine is served] or [our meeting place] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

the house of wine

The woman is referring to a private meeting place, one in which they could enjoy expressing their love for each other. She speaks of it in a polite way by using the phrase **house of wine**, an image that was meaningful in her culture. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a polite way of referring to this in your language, or you could state this plainly. Alternate translation: [our meeting place so that we could enjoy our love] or [the place where we could celebrate our love for each other] or [the place where we could consummate our love] (See: **Euphemism (p.190)**)

and his banner over me {is} love

The woman is speaking of the man’s **love** for her as if it were a **banner**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and he publicly displays his love for me, and his intention is to protect me] or [and he covers me with his love] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

and his banner

A **banner** is a flag made from a large piece of cloth that is attached to a long pole. People, groups, and kings had their own unique banners by which they identified themselves. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of flag, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [and his flag] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

and his banner over me {is} love

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **love**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [and his banner shows that I belong to him, and he loves me] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p. 148)**)

Song of Solomon 2:5

Sustain me with raisin cakes; refresh me with apples

These two clauses mean basically the same thing. In the author's culture both raisins and **apples** were believed to give people strength for love. The second clause emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words. Hebrew poetry was based on this kind of repetition. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could connect the clauses with a word that shows that the second clause is repeating the first one, not saying something additional, or you could combine these two clauses into one. Alternate translation: [Sustain me with raisin cakes; yes, refresh me with apples] or [strengthen me with fruit] or [strengthen me for love with fruit] (See: **Parallelism (p.235)**)

Sustain me & refresh me

The phrases **Sustain me** and **refresh me** are plural imperative forms in the original language. The woman is addressing the man using plural forms to show the intensity of her feelings. The ULT indicates this intensity by placing an exclamation point at the end of this verse. Your language may allow you to use a plural form for this purpose, or you could use the singular form and show the intensity of emotion in another way. (See: **Unusual Uses of the Plural (p.270)**)

Sustain me with raisin cakes; refresh me with apples, for sick with love {am} I

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: [Because I am sick with love, sustain me with raisin cakes and refresh me with apples] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.175)**)

with raisin cakes

Here, **raisin cakes** were cakes made of dried grapes pressed together. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of fruit, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [with cakes made of dried fruit] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

with apples

See how you translated the word "apple" in 2:3. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

for sick with love {am} I

The woman speaks of feeling **sick with love** as an exaggeration to emphasize the strength of her feelings for the man. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different way to express the emphasis. Alternate translation: [for my love for you is so strong that I feel as if I were sick with love] or [because my love for you overwhelms me like a sickness] (See: **Hyperbole (p.208)**)

love

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **love**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [longing for you] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.148)**)

Song of Solomon 2:6

His left hand {is} under my head, and his right hand embraces me

This verse could be describing: (1) an action that the man was doing, in which case it should be translated in a similar way to the ULT. (2) a request or wish that the woman has, and not something which has already happened. Alternate translation: [I hope he puts his left arm under my head and holds me close with his right arm] or [I want him to put his left arm under my head and hold me close with his right arm]

His left hand {is} under my head

Alternate translation: [The man I love cradles my head on his left arm]

Song of Solomon 2:7

I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem

Here the woman is speaking to the **daughters of Jerusalem**, but most likely they are not present. The woman is doing this as a poetic way of giving voice to her strong feelings. Because the author does this intentionally for poetic effect, it is suggested that you do the same. If it would be helpful in your language, you could indicate this in a footnote. (See: **Apostrophe (p.153)**)

I adjure you, & by the female gazelles or the does of the field

The phrase **I adjure you** and the word **by** are both parts of a Hebrew oath formula. Use a natural way in your language to express an oath. Alternate translation: [I urge you to promise me … with the female gazelles or the does of the field as our witnesses] or [Please promise me … with the female gazelles or the does of the field as our witnesses] or [I want you to make an oath … with the female gazelles or the does of the field listening] (See: **Oath Formulas (p.231)**)

daughters of Jerusalem

See how you translated the phrase **daughters of Jerusalem** in 1:5. (See: **Possession (p.244)**)

by the female gazelles or the does of the field

Here the woman is using the possessive form to describe the **female gazelles** and **does** that are characterized as being **of the field** and therefore are wild animals. If your language would not use the possessive form for this, you could explain the meaning of the phrase **of the field** in your translation. Alternate translation: [by the wild female gazelles and does] or [by the wild female gazelles or the wild does] or [by the female gazelles or the does that live in the wild] (See: **Possession (p.244)**)

by the female gazelles

A gazelle is a small type of antelope, that looks and moves like a deer and is similar in size. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of animal, you could use the name of a similar animal in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [by the female antelopes] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

the does of

The writer assumes that the reader will understand that **does** refers to female deer. You could include this information if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [the female deer of] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

do not awaken nor stir love until it desires

Here the woman speaks of **love** as if it were a person who could sleep, **awaken**, and have **desires**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [do not encourage people to love romantically until the appropriate time] or [do not encourage people to have romantic feelings until the appropriate time] (See: **Personification (p.238)**)

do not awaken nor stir

Here the words **awaken** and **stir** mean similar things. The repetition is used for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: [do not awaken] or [do not stir up feelings of] (See: **Doublet (p.185)**)

love

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **love**, you could express the same idea in another way. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.148)**)

Song of Solomon 2:8

The voice of my beloved

Here the word **voice** either refers to: (1) the man's words that he is speaking or (2) the sound of his voice which indicates he is approaching. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Listen, I hear my beloved speaking] or [Listen, I hear my beloved approaching] (See: **Metonymy (p.226)**)

Behold

Behold is an exclamation word that is used to bring attention to the man's approach. Use an exclamation that would communicate that meaning in your language. See how you translated **Behold** in 1:15. Alternate translation: [See] (See: **Exclamations (p.192)**)

is coming

Your language may say "going" rather than **coming** in contexts such as this. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: [is going] (See: **Go and Come (p.202)**)

leaping over the mountains, jumping over the hills

These two phrases mean the same thing. The second emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine these two phrases and provide emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [leaping over the mountains!] or [leaping and jumping over the mountains and hills!] (See: **Parallelism (p.235)**)

מְדַלֵּג עַל־הָרִים מְקַפֵּץ עַל־הַגְּבָעוֹת: דּוֹמֶה דוֹדִי לִצְבִי אוֹ לְעֹפֶר הָאַיָּלִים

The woman is saying that the man she loves **is like a gazelle or a young stag** because he appears strong and exuberant as he approaches her. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: [leaping over the mountains, jumping over the hills. My beloved is agile and exuberant, and he exudes freedom and strength as does a gazelle or young stag] (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

מְדַלֵּג עַל־הָרִים מְקַפֵּץ עַל־הַגְּבָעוֹת: דּוֹמֶה דוֹדִי לִצְבִי אוֹ לְעֹפֶר הָאַיָּלִים

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases. Alternate translation: [My beloved is being like a gazelle or a young stag, leaping over the mountains, jumping over the hills] (See: **Information Structure (p.217)**)

Song of Solomon 2:9

a gazelle

See how you translated the plural form, “gazelles,” in 2:7; then translate this word as the singular form of “gazelles.” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

stag

The writer assumes that the readers will understand that a **stag** is an adult male deer. You could include this information if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [adult male deer] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

Behold

See how you translated the word **Behold** in 1:15 where it occurs with the same meaning. (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

this one

Here the phrase **this one** refers to the man whom the woman calls **My beloved** in the first part of this verse. If this is not clear for your readers, you could specify the person here. Alternate translation: [this man] or [my beloved] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.248)**)

behind our wall

Here the word **our** refers to the woman and her family and does not include the man, so use the exclusive form of that word in your translation if your language marks that distinction. Alternate translation: [behind the wall of my house] or [on the other side of the wall of my family’s house] (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.194)**)

gazing through the windows, looking through the lattices

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The second emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words. Hebrew poetry was based on this kind of repetition, and it would be good to show this to your readers by including both phrases in your translation rather than combining them. However, if it would be helpful to your readers, you could connect the phrases with a word other than “and” in order to show that the second phrase is repeating the first one, not saying something additional. Alternate translation: [gazing through the windows, yes, looking through the lattices] (See: **Parallelism (p.235)**)

the windows, & the lattices

Here the words **windows** and **lattices** are plural forms and could: (1) have a plural meaning here, indicating that the man was walking around the house and looking into the house through different windows and lattices. (2) be used with singular meanings here, indicating the multiple openings of a single window and lattice. Alternate translation: [the window … the lattice] (See: **Unusual Uses of the Plural (p.270)**)

the lattices

The **lattices** are vertical and horizontal strips found inside a window frame. They have spaces between them through which a person could look. If your readers would not be familiar with lattices, you could use the name of

something similar in your area, or you could use the wording of the UST. Alternate translation: [the screen] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

Song of Solomon 2:10

and come

Your language may say “go” rather than **come** in a context such as this. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: [and go] (See: **Go and Come (p.202)**)

Song of Solomon 2:11

behold

The man is using the term **behold** to focus the woman's attention on what he is about to say. Your language may have a comparable expression that you could use in your translation. Alternate translation: [see] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

for, behold

Here the word **for** indicates that what follows is a reason for what came before. Use a connector in your language that makes it clear that what follows is a reason for what came before. Alternate translation: [behold, this is because] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.175)**)

the winter

In Israel, **winter** is the time of year when it is cold and rains more heavily than during other seasons. If the seasons do not vary much in your location, you could explain this with a general expression such as "the cold season." Alternate translation: [the cold, rainy season] or [the cold, wet season] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

the winter has gone; the rain has passed

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The second emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words. Hebrew poetry was based on this kind of repetition, and it would be good to show this to your readers by including both phrases in your translation rather than combining them. However, if it would be helpful to your readers, you could connect the phrases with a word other than "and" in order to show that the second phrase is repeating the first one, not saying something additional. Alternate translation: [the winter has gone; yes, the rain has passed] (See: **Parallelism (p.235)**)

has gone

Your language might not say **has gone** in a context such as this. Alternate translation: [is finished] or [is over] (See: **Go and Come (p.202)**)

it went away

Alternate translation: [it has ended] or [it has departed]

has passed; it went away

The terms **passed** and **went away** mean similar things. The author is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: [is over and gone] or [has gone away] (See: **Doublet (p.185)**)

Song of Solomon 2:12

in the land

Alternate translation: [throughout the land]

and the voice of the turtledove is heard

If your language does not use a passive form like **the turtledove is heard**, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, it is clear from the context that it is people. Alternate translation: [and people hear the voice of the turtledove] or [and people hear the turtledove cooing] (See: **Active or Passive (p.150)**)

Song of Solomon 2:13

The fig tree ripens its green figs

In this verse, the word **fig tree** is in singular form but refers to all the fig trees as a group. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this plainly. Alternate translation: [The fig trees are ripening their green figs] or [The figs on the trees are becoming ripe] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.166)**)

and the vines {are in} blossom

Alternate translation: [and the grapevines are flowering] or [and the grapevines are blossoming]

they give off a smell

Here the pronoun **they** refers to the blossoms on the grapevines. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: [their flowers give off a pleasant smell] or [their blossoms have a sweet smell] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.248)**)

Get up, come, my darling, my beauty, and come

See how you translated the similar phrase in 2:10. Alternate translation: [Get up, go, my darling, my beauty, and go] (See: **Go and Come (p.202)**)

Song of Solomon 2:14

My dove

Here the phrase **My dove** could be: (1) the man speaking directly to the woman. Alternate translation: [O my dove] (2) the man speaking about the woman rather than speaking to her directly. Alternate translation: [The woman I love is a dove] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.183)**)

My dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the hiding places of the cliff

Here the man speaks to the woman he loves as if she were his **dove**. He then tells her the way in which she is like a dove. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [O my one who is like a dove. You are like a gentle and timid dove which hides in the clefts of the rock and in the hiding places of the cliff] or [You are like a dove, like a gentle and shy dove which hides in the clefts of the rock and in the hiding places of the cliff] or [You are like a dove, far away in the clefts of the rock, in the hiding places of the cliff] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

in the clefts of the rock, in the hiding places of the cliff

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The second emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words. Hebrew poetry was based on this kind of repetition, and it would be good to show this to your readers by including both phrases in your translation rather than combining them. However, if it would be helpful to your readers, you could connect the phrases with a word such as “yes” in order to show that the second phrase is repeating a similar idea to the first one, not saying something additional. You could also combine the two lines as modeled by the UST. Alternate translation: [in the clefts of the rock, yes, in the hiding places of the cliff] (See: **Parallelism (p.235)**)

in the clefts of the rock

Alternate translation: [in the cracks of the rock]

show me your appearance, make me hear your voice, for your voice {is} sweet, and your appearance {is} lovely

Here two ideas are presented and then they are further explained in reverse order. This is called a chiasm. Biblical Hebrew sometimes uses this literary device. If possible, try to follow this AB-BA sequence of presenting the information here. See the chapter introduction for more information regarding chiasms. (See: **Poetry (p.240)**)

show me your appearance, make me hear

The phrases **show me** and **make me hear** are imperatives, but they communicate a polite request rather than a command. Use a form in your language that communicates a polite request. It may be helpful to add an expression such as “please” or “let” to make this clear. Alternate translation: [please let me see your appearance, please let me hear] or [let me see you, let me hear] (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.214)**)

your voice {is} sweet

Alternate translation: [your voice is sweet-sounding] or [your voice sounds beautiful]

Song of Solomon 2:15

Catch the foxes for us, the little foxes that destroy the vineyards, and our vineyards {are in} blossom

Here the writer is speaking of **the foxes** as if they represent things, perhaps even other men, who could harm the man and woman's developing relationship with each other. Catching **the foxes** represents removing or protecting against them. The **vineyards** represent the love the man and woman have for each other. The phrase **our vineyards {are in} blossom** means that their love is growing, like a plant blossoms and grows. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Get rid of the harmful things that hinder and damage our relationship, for our relationship is blossoming] or [Remove the little things that threaten our growing relationship] or [There are other men who are like little foxes that ruin vineyards; do not allow those men to attack me] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

the foxes for us, the little foxes

It is possible that the word that the ULT translates as **foxes** could, instead, refer to jackals. Jackals are wild dogs that resemble wolves and coyotes. Alternate translation: [the jackals for us, the little jackals] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

the foxes for us, the little foxes

Both **foxes** and jackals are land animals that are similar to small dogs and would ruin vineyards by digging up roots and eating the budding blossoms. If your readers would not be familiar with these animals and their habits, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [the dog-like animals for us, the little dog-like animals] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

for us, & and our vineyards

Here the words **us** and **our** refer to the woman and the man, so use the inclusive forms of these words if your language marks that distinction. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.194)**)

and our vineyards {are in} blossom

Alternate translation: [because the grapevines in our vineyards are blooming] or [because our grapevines are in bloom]

Song of Solomon 2:16

My beloved {belongs} to me and I {belong} to him

The woman is speaking about the man in the third person even though she is most likely speaking directly to the man. This is common in Hebrew poetry. If this would not be natural in your language, you can translate this in a way that indicates that the woman is speaking directly to the man. Alternate translation: [My beloved, you belong to me, and I belong to you] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.196)**)

the man grazing among the lilies

The phrase **the man grazing among the lilies** could mean: (1) that the man himself is grazing among the lilies. (2) that the man grazes his flock of animals among the lilies. Alternate translation: [the man grazing his flock among the lilies]

the man grazing among the lilies

Here the woman is speaking of the man as if he were “a gazelle or a young stag” (2:9) that eats **among the lilies**. She is using **lilies** to represent herself as she did in 2:1. Here, **the lilies** probably represent the woman’s lips. The meaning here is that the man finds sustenance and enjoyment through being with the woman and kissing her lips. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [my beloved gets pleasure grazing among the lilies] or [my beloved gets pleasure as he grazes among the lilies] (See: **Metaphor (p. 220)**)

among the lilies

See how you translated “lily” (the singular form of **lilies**) in 2:1. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

Song of Solomon 2:17

the day breathes and the shadows flee

The phrases **the day breathes** and **the shadows flee** mean basically the same thing. The second emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words. Hebrew poetry was based on this type of repetition, and it would be good to show this to your readers by including both phrases in your translation rather than combining them. Together, they both either refer to: (1) the evening time, when the evening breeze blows (**breathes**) and the shadows cast by the sun disappear (**flee**). Alternate translation: [the evening time when the breeze blows and the shadows cast by the sun disappear] or (2) the morning time, when the light from the sun dawns and the morning breeze blows (**breathes**). Alternate translation: [dawn tomorrow morning, when the darkness disappears] (See: **Parallelism (p.235)**)

and the shadows flee

Here the author is leaving out the word **Until** that in many languages this sentence would need in order to be complete. You could supply this word from earlier in the sentence if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [and until the shadows flee] (See: **Ellipsis (p.187)**)

turn; resemble, my beloved

Alternate translation: [turn; my beloved, and be like]

a gazelle

See how you translated the plural form “gazelles” in 2:7, and translate this word as the singular form of “gazelles.” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

the mountains of Bether

The word **Bether** is a word borrowed from the Hebrew that means “cleft” or “divided.” You will need to decide if you will borrow it into your language or if you will translate the meaning. Either approach has broad support. Here it could: (1) be a proper name that refers to a specific place in Israel. If you choose this option, then in your translation you could spell it the way that it sounds in your language and then put the meaning in a footnote. (2) be a description of **the mountains**. Alternate translation: [the cleft mountains] or [the rugged mountains] or [the mountain gorges] (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.181)**)

Song of Solomon 3

Song of Songs 3 General Notes

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Longing

Verses 3:1-3 describe the feeling of longing that the woman has for the man she loves, and it describes her diligently seeking him. Verse [3:4]../03/04.md) describes the woman finding the man she loves, holding onto him, and bringing him to her mother's house.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Whether verses 3:1-4 describe a dream, a real event, or something imagined

Bible scholars do not know for certain whether the events described in 3:1-4 are real events or something that the woman dreamed or imagined. Many Bible scholars think that verses 3:1-4 describe a dream. You may wish to explain this in a footnote, or you could indicate in a section header whether you think this is a dream, a real event, or something she imagined. You could also use a general section header such as "The woman searches for the man she loves and finds him," which does not indicate whether this was a dream, a real event, or something imagined.

Song of Solomon 3:1

On my bed in the night

Because Bible scholars do not know if the events described in 3:1-4 describe real events, dreams, or things imagined, you should not expand on or explain the phrase **On my bed in the night** in the text. However, you may wish to make reference to these possibilities in a header or footnote. See the section “Translation Issues in This Chapter” in the chapter introduction for more information. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.274)**)

in the night

In the original language, the phrase **in the night** uses a plural form of **night** and could mean that the woman: (1) sought the man during the night. Alternate translation: [during the night] (2) sought the man throughout the night. Alternate translation: [throughout the night] or [all night long] (3) sought the man on many nights. Alternate translation: [night after night] (See: **Unusual Uses of the Plural (p.270)**)

I sought him whom my soul loves; I sought him

The phrase **I sought him** is repeated for emphasis. Hebrew poetry often uses repetition for emphasis. You may be able to use the same construction in your language to show the emphasis here. Alternatively, your language may have another way of showing the emphasis. Alternate translation: [I desperately sought him whom my soul loves] or [I earnestly sought him whom my soul loves] (See: **Poetry (p.240)**)

him whom my soul loves

See how you translated the similar phrase “you whom my soul loves” in 1:7. Alternate translation: [him whom I love] (See: **Synecdoche (p.263)**)

Song of Solomon 3:2

I will get up now

The writer assumes that the reader will understand that the woman is thinking or saying this to herself. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [I thought to myself, 'I will get up now'] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

and go about in the city

Alternate translation: [and walk through the city]

and in the squares

The word **squares** refers to spacious open places where people gather to sell things and conduct business and legal matters. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of place, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [and in the open plazas] or [and in the wide-open places] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

I will seek & I sought him

Alternate translation: [I will look for … I looked for him]

him whom my soul loves

See how you translated the similar phrase "you whom my soul loves" in 1:7. Alternate translation: [him whom I love] (See: **Synecdoche (p.263)**)

Song of Solomon 3:3

The guards

The word **guards** refers to men who had the job of walking about the city during the night for the purpose of keeping the people safe. If your readers would not be familiar with this term, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

Have} you seen him whom my soul loves

The woman is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: [I said to them, “Have you seen him whom my soul loves] (See: **Ellipsis (p.187)**)

him whom my soul loves

See how you translated the similar phrase “you whom my soul loves” in 1:7. Alternate translation: [him whom I love] (See: **Synecdoche (p.263)**)

Have} you seen him whom my soul loves

Alternate translation: [Do you know where the man whom I love is?]

Song of Solomon 3:4

Hardly

Alternate translation: [Scarcely]

him whom my soul loves

See how you translated the similar phrase “you whom my soul loves” in 1:7. Alternate translation: [him whom I love] (See: **Synecdoche (p.263)**)

I had brought him

Your language may say “taken” rather than **brought** in a context such as this. Use whichever is more natural in your language. Alternate translation: [I had taken him] (See: **Go and Come (p.202)**)

I had brought him to the house of my mother and to the room of the woman who conceived me

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The second emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words. Hebrew poetry was based on this kind of repetition, and it would be good to show this to your readers by including both phrases in your translation rather than combining them. However, if it would be helpful to your readers, you could connect the phrases with a word other than “and” in order to show that the second phrase is repeating the first one, not saying something additional. Alternate translation: [I had brought him to the house of my mother; yes, to the room of the woman who had conceived me] (See: **Parallelism (p.235)**)

Song of Solomon 3:5

I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, by the female gazelles or the does of the field, do not awaken nor stir love until it desires

This verse is identical to Song of Songs 2:7. Translate this verse exactly as you translated that verse. This verse is a refrain (a repeated phrase). Refrains are a common feature of poetry. This refrain closes section 2:8-3:5. (See: **Poetry (p.240)**)

Song of Solomon 3:6

Who {is} that coming up from the wilderness like columns of smoke, fragrant smoke of myrrh and frankincense, from all the powders of the merchant

The phrase **Who is that** could: (1) be a rhetorical question used to create a sense of expectation and interest. If you would not use a question for this purpose in your language, you could translate this as a statement or an exclamation. Alternate translation: [Look who is coming up from the wilderness like columns of smoke, fragrant smoke of myrrh and frankincense, from all the powders of the merchant] (2) be a request for information. Alternate translation: [Who is it that I see arising from the wilderness like columns of smoke, fragrant smoke of myrrh and frankincense from all the powders of the merchant] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.254)**)

is} that coming up from the wilderness

The word translated as **that** here could refer to: (1) Solomon's "litter," which is named in the following verse. Alternate translation: [is that group of people arising from the wilderness] (2) the woman. Alternate translation: [is this woman arising from the wilderness]

coming up

The writer assumes that the readers will understand that the phrase **coming up** describes the group of people traveling from the wilderness to Jerusalem because the wilderness is in the valley and Jerusalem is built on high hills. Use a word or phrase that expresses moving upward in elevation. Alternate translation: [moving upward] or [arising] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

coming up

Your language may say "going" rather than **coming** in a context such as this. Use whichever is more natural in your language. Alternate translation: [going up] (See: **Go and Come (p.202)**)

like columns of smoke, fragrant smoke of myrrh and frankincense

The writer is saying that the dust clouds created by a group of people traveling in a dry area are **like columns of smoke, fragrant smoke of myrrh and frankincense**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [creating a dust cloud that resembles a column of smoke, which resembles the fragrant smoke of myrrh and frankincense] (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

like columns of smoke, fragrant smoke of myrrh and frankincense

Here the phrase **fragrant smoke of myrrh and frankincense** could be: (1) further describing the words **coming up**. Alternate translation: [creating dust clouds that resemble rising columns of smoke; Yes, creating dust clouds that resemble the fragrant smoke of myrrh and frankincense] (2) describing the phrase **columns of smoke**. Alternate translation: [like a column of smoke, incensed with myrrh and frankincense] (See: **Parallelism (p.235)**)

fragrant smoke of

The writer is leaving out a word that in many languages a sentence would need to be complete. You could supply this word from earlier in the sentence if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [like fragrant smoke of] (See: **Ellipsis (p.187)**)

myrrh

Alternate translation: [the sweet-smelling incense made from the resin of a myrrh tree]

from all the powders of the merchant

The word translated as **from all** could: (1) be introducing **the powders of the merchant** as additional information about myrrh and frankincense. Alternate translation: [which are among the powders of the merchant] (2) indicate that **the powders of the merchant** are being introduced as additional things the merchant sells. Alternate translation: [and other powders of the merchants] (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.177)**)

Song of Solomon 3:7

Behold

See how you translated the word **Behold** in 1:15 where it occurs with the same meaning. (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

his litter

A **litter** was a portable bed or couch used to carry important people from place to place. It was carried by wooden poles that were attached to it. This litter probably had a canopy on top that functioned as a roof and curtains around it that could be opened and closed. If your readers would not be familiar with this term, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [his portable couch] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

his litter, which {belongs} to Solomon

The phrase **his litter, which belongs to Solomon** could mean: (1) that the woman was riding on the litter which belonged to Solomon and which he had sent for her. The UST models this interpretation. (2) that Solomon himself was riding in the litter. Alternate translation: [Solomon riding in his royal portable chair]

Song of Solomon 3:8

studied {in} war

Alternate translation: [trained in warfare] or [and all of them have been trained to use their swords]

Each one {has} his sword at his thigh, against the terrors in the nights

The implication is that **Each one has his sword at his thigh** means that his sword is strapped to his thigh so that it is ready to use to defend **against the terrors in the nights**. You could include this information if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [Each warrior has his sword strapped to his thigh so that it is ready to use against the terrors in the nights] or [Each warrior has his sword ready to use to defend against the terrors in the nights] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

against the terrors in the nights

The woman is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: [ready to guard against dangers that happen during the night] or [ready to defend against the dangers of the night] (See: **Ellipsis (p.187)**)

Song of Solomon 3:9

a palanquin

A **palanquin** is a “sedan chair”. Here it refers to the same object that the term “litter” referred to in 3:7 only in more descriptive terms. You could translate the term **palanquin** the same way you translated “litter” in 3:7 or you could use the name of something similar in your area. Alternate translation: [a portable couch] or [a sedan chair] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

He made for himself a palanquin, King Solomon, from the trees of Lebanon

Alternate translation: [King Solomon had a palanquin made from the trees in Lebanon]

אַפִּרְיֹון עָשָׂה לוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ שְׁלֹמֹה מֵעֲצֵי הַלְּבָנוֹן: עַמּוּדָיו עָשָׂה כֶסֶף רִפִּידָתוֹ זָהָב מֶרְכָּבוֹ
אַרְגָּמָן תּוֹכוֹ רָצוּף אַהֲבָה מִבְּנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלִָם

These two verses give background information about the **palanquin** to help readers understand the description more completely. In your translation, present this information in a way that makes it clear that this is background information. (See: **Background Information (p.158)**)

He made for himself a palanquin & He made its posts {out of} silver

The implication is that Solomon had people make **a palanquin** for him, not that he made it himself. You could include this information if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [He had craftsmen make him a palanquin...He had craftsmen make its post with silver] or [He had a palanquin made for him...He had its posts made with silver] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

Song of Solomon 3:10

He made its posts {out of} silver

The writer assumes that the readers will know that the **posts** were made of wood and overlaid with **silver**. You could include this information if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [He made its posts of wood that was overlaid with silver] or [He made its posts of wood covered in silver] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

its back, gold

The writer is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need to be complete. You could supply these words from the context if it would be clearer in your language. The phrase **its back, gold** could mean: (1) that the base or foundation of the palanquin was covered in gold. Alternate translation: [its foundation was covered in gold] or [its base of gold] (2) the back of the chair was covered in gold. Alternate translation: [its back is made from gold] (See: **Ellipsis (p.187)**)

its seat, purple cloth

Alternate translation: [and covered the cushion with purple cloth]

Its interior was fitted {with} love from the daughters of Jerusalem

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express this idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [The daughters of Jerusalem fitted its interior with love] (See: **Active or Passive (p.150)**)

Its interior was fitted {with} love from the daughters of Jerusalem

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **love**, you could express the same idea in another way that is natural in your language. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.148)**)

Its interior was fitted {with} love from the daughters of Jerusalem

Alternate translation: [The inside of it was lovingly inlaid with decorations by the women of Jerusalem]

from the daughters of Jerusalem

See how you translated the phrase **daughters of Jerusalem** in 1:5. (See: **Possession (p.244)**)

Song of Solomon 3:11

Go out

Your language may say “Come out” rather than **Go out** in a context such as this. Use whichever is more natural in your language. Alternate translation: [Come out] (See: **Go and Come (p.202)**)

daughters of Zion

Here the possessive form **daughters of Zion** is a poetic way of describing the young women who were from the city of Jerusalem (These are probably the same women as the “marriageable women” in 1:3 and the women referred to as “daughters of Jerusalem” in 2:7 and 3:5). If your language would not use the possessive form for this, you could indicate the association between these young women and Zion in a way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [young women from Zion] or [young women from the city of Zion] or [you young women who live in Zion] (See: **Possession (p.244)**)

on the day of his wedding, on the day of the joy of his heart

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The second emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words. Hebrew poetry was based on this kind of repetition, and it would be good to show this to your readers by including both phrases in your translation rather than combining them. However, if it would be helpful to your readers, you could connect the phrases with a word other than “and” in order to show that the second phrase is repeating the first one, not saying something additional. Alternate translation: [on the day of his wedding, yes, on the day of the joy of his heart] (See: **Parallelism (p.235)**)

on the day of the joy of his heart

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **joy**, you could express the same idea in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [on the day his heart was exceedingly joyful] or [on the day when his heart was very joyful] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.148)**)

on the day of the joy of his heart

Here, **heart** represents Solomon’s inner being which the Jews viewed as the center of a person’s mind and feelings. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language or state the meaning plainly. (See: **Metonymy (p.226)**)

Song of Solomon 4

Song of Songs 4 General Notes

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Beauty

The man describes the woman he loves as the epitome of beauty and attractiveness in 4:1-5 and in 4:7.

Feelings of longing to be with one's lover who seems distant and temporarily inaccessible

In 4:8 the man speaks of the woman he loves as if she were far away from him, and he invites her to "come with" him and "descend from" the height of three high places and be with him. The woman is not actually dwelling in these places, but rather the man is using imaginative and poetic language to describe how he feels about being separated from her and to describe his desire to be with her. In 4:12 the man uses poetic language to describe the fact that the woman he loves is temporarily inaccessible.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

The garden metaphor

In this chapter, 4:12-5:1 is an extended metaphor. This metaphor is a conversation between the man and the woman he loves in which he first compares her to "a locked garden" (4:12-4:15) where many delightful things grow. She responds by inviting him to come to her garden in 4:16. The man then responds to her invitation in 5:1. The term "garden" is used as a metaphor for the woman in 4:12, 4:16 (two times), and 5:1. You should be consistent in how you translate the term "garden." In 4:13, the man speaks of the woman's body as "an orchard of pomegranate trees with delicious fruits," and then in 4:16 she invites the man to "come to his garden and eat its delicious fruit." (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.161)**)

The "sister" metaphor

The phrase "my sister" is used in 4:9, 4:10, 4:12, 5:1, and 5:2. The man uses this phrase as a term of endearment for the woman he loves. She is not actually his sister. You should translate this phrase the same way each time it occurs here, because the author uses it with the same meaning each time. See the note at the first occurrence of this phrase in 4:9 for more information.

Song of Solomon 4:1

Behold you! {You are} beautiful, my darling. Behold you! {You are} beautiful

See how you translated these two parallel phrases in 1:15. (See: **Parallelism (p.235)**)

Your eyes {are} doves from behind your veil

See how you translated the phrase **Your eyes are doves** in 1:15. (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

Your hair {is} like a flock of goats that hop down from {the} slopes of Gilead

The writer is saying that both the color and the motion of the woman's hair is **like a flock of goats that hop down from the slopes of Gilead**. The original readers would have understood this to mean that the woman's hair was black since goats in Israel were also black. Seen from a distance, a flock of black goats descending from the heights of Mount Gilead would have created a majestic visual effect because the goats would have looked like one long flowing mass of black. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [Your black hair moves in graceful waves like a flock of black goats moving down the slopes of Mount Gilead] or [Your long black hair flows in graceful waves like a flock of black goats coming down the slopes of Mount Gilead] (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

Song of Solomon 4:2

Your teeth {are} like a flock of shorn {sheep} that have come up from the washing

The writer is saying that the white color of the woman's **teeth** is being compared to the white color of sheep after they have been **shorn** and washed. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

shorn {sheep

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, it is implied that "shepherds" did it. Alternate translation: [sheep whose wool shepherds have cut off] or [sheep whose wool people have cut off] (See: **Active or Passive (p.150)**)

bear twins

Alternate translation: [give birth to twins]

all of which bear twins, and there is not among them one which is bereaved

The writer is stating that the woman's **teeth are like a flock of** female sheep which have all given birth to twin lambs because each of the woman's teeth has a matching tooth on the other side of her mouth. She has not lost any of her teeth. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [As a flock of female sheep that has born twin lambs without losing any, so your mouth has its teeth, each with a match, and none of them are missing] (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

and there is not among them one which is bereaved

Alternate translation: [and there is not one among them which has died]

Song of Solomon 4:3

Like a thread of scarlet {are} your lips

The writer is stating that the woman's lips are **Like a thread of scarlet** because they are a bright red color. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. You could also use a term for a material that is thicker than thread such as ribbon. Alternate translation: [Your lips are a beautiful red like scarlet thread] or [Your lips are a beautiful red like scarlet ribbon] (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

Like a slice of pomegranate {are} your cheeks

The term translated as **cheeks** could: (1) refer to the woman's two cheeks on the side of her mouth. (2) be translated as "temples" and refer to the woman's two temples on the side of her forehead. Alternate translation: [Like a slice of pomegranate are your temples] (3) be translated as "forehead." Alternate translation: [Like a slice of pomegranate is your forehead]

Like a slice of pomegranate {are} your cheeks

The writer could be comparing: (1) the shape of the woman's **cheeks** to the shape of a **pomegranate** which has been sliced in half and to the red outside color of a pomegranate. Alternate translation: [Your cheeks are red and rounded like a slice of pomegranate] or [Your cheeks resemble the color and shape of a slice of pomegranate] or (if you decided that the term **cheeks** refers to the woman's temples) [Your temples are red like a slice of pomegranate] (2) the way the woman's cheeks looked through the inside of the veil to the color and pattern of a **pomegranate** which has been sliced in half. Alternate translation: [Your cheeks resemble the color and pattern of the inside of a slice of pomegranate] or (if you decided that the term **cheeks** refers to the woman's temples) [Your temples are the color of the inside of a slice of pomegranate] (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

from behind your veil

See how you translated the phrase **from behind your veil** in 4:1.

Song of Solomon 4:4

Like the tower of David {is} your neck, built of layers

The writer is saying that the woman's **neck** is **Like the tower of David** which was a tall fortress **built of layers** or rows. A long neck was considered beautiful in the writer's culture. King David built some of his towers of beautiful marble rock. It is probable that this tower was made from marble since it is compared to the beauty of the woman's neck. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [Your neck is long and beautiful like the tower of David] or [Your neck is beautiful like the tower of David] (See: **Simile (p. 258)**)

Like the tower of David {is

The **tower of David** was a tall building built for defense. Towers were significantly taller than other buildings and often were not wide. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of structure, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [Like the tall, narrow defense structure of David is] or [Like David's tall, thin rock defense building is] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

Like the tower of David {is} your neck, built of layers

If your language does not use a passive form like **built of layers**, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, the context implies that David instructed men to build it. Alternate translation: [Your neck is like the tower of David that men built in layers] or [Your neck is like the tower of David that David had men build of layers] (See: **Active or Passive (p.150)**)

built of layers

Alternate translation: [built using rows of stones]

a thousand shields hanging on it, all the shields of the warriors

In the writer's culture it was a common practice to hang shields on walls as decorations. Here the man compares the beauty of the woman's neck with **shields hanging on** the **tower of David**. This comparison probably included the decorations of the woman's necklaces which probably went around her neck many times. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [The beauty of your neck jeweled in necklaces is like a thousand warriors' shields hanging from a tower] (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

a thousand

In the writer's culture, the number **a thousand** was often used to represent a very large, but not precise, amount. This is how the number is being used here. Alternate translation: [with many] (See: **Numbers (p.228)**)

a thousand shields hanging on it, all the shields of the warriors

The phrase **all the shields of the warriors** is parallel to the statement **a thousand shields hanging on it** and adds the additional information that the **shields** belonged to **the warriors**. Hebrew poetry often used this kind of parallel statement, in which the second line gives additional information, so it would be good to show this to your readers by including both phrases in your translation rather than combining them. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could connect these two parallel phrases with "each of which" or "each one" in order to show that the second phrase is not repeating the first one but rather saying something additional. Alternate translation: [a

thousand shields hanging on it, each of which belongs to the warriors] or [a thousand shields hanging on it, each one belonging to the warriors] (See: **Parallelism (p.235)**)

Song of Solomon 4:5

Your two breasts {are} like two fawns, twins of a female gazelle, the ones pasturing among the lilies

Here the man compares the woman's **two breasts** to young twin gazelles. The context does not explicitly indicate how exactly the woman's breasts are like young gazelles so it would be best if you leave the point of comparison unstated and simply express the simile as the author of this book has done. (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

a female gazelle

See how you translated the plural form "gazelles" in 2:7. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

among the lilies

See how you translated the singular form "lily" in 2:1. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

Song of Solomon 4:6

Until the day breathes and the shadows flee

See how you translated the phrase **Until the day breathes and the shadows flee** in 2:17. (See: **Personification (p. 238)**)

I myself will go

Your language may say “come” rather than **go** in a context such as this. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: [I myself will come] (See: **Go and Come (p.202)**)

myrrh

See how you translated **myrrh** in 1:13. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

I myself will go to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense

Here the writer is speaking of the woman’s breasts as if they are **the mountain of myrrh** and **the hill of frankincense**. The man is discreetly indicating that his bride’s breasts are pleasant smelling and that he wants to enjoy them. It would be good to retain this discreet and beautiful poetic imagery if possible. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly or use a comparison. Alternate translation: [I myself will go to your breasts, which are like two sweet-smelling mountains] or [I myself will be close to your breasts, which are like two pleasant-smelling hills] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

Song of Solomon 4:7

All of you {is} beautiful

Alternate translation: [Every part of you is beautiful]

Song of Solomon 4:8

Come} with me from Lebanon, {my} bride; come with me from Lebanon. Descend from the top of Amana, from the top of Senir and Hermon, from the hiding places of lions, from the mountains of leopards

This entire verse is a metaphor. This is poetry and the writer is not literally indicating that the woman is in the mountains and in danger. Rather, he is using this metaphor to express his feelings regarding the distance between them and his strong desire to have her near him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

Come} with me & come

Your language may say “go” rather than **come** in a context such as this. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: [Go with me … go] (See: **Go and Come (p.202)**)

Descend

The word translated as **Descend** here could mean: (1) to come down from a height. Alternate translation: [Climb down] (2) to bend down and look. Alternate translation: [Bend down and look]

from the top of Amana, from the top of Senir and Hermon

The word **Hermon** is the name of a mountain range in northern Israel, and **Amana** and **Senir** are both the names of mountain peaks. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.204)**)

from the hiding places of lions, from the mountains of leopards

These two phrases mean very similar things. The second emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words. Hebrew poetry was based on this kind of repetition, and it would be good to show this to your readers by including both phrases in your translation rather than combining them. However, if it would be helpful for your readers, you could combine these two phrases into one as modeled by the UST. (See: **Parallelism (p.235)**)

Song of Solomon 4:9

You have enchanted my heart, my sister, {my} bride; you have enchanted my heart

If it would be more natural in your language, you could change the order of these phrases. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could also add the word “yes” to show that the phrase **You have enchanted my heart** is repeated in order to add emphasis. Alternate translation: [My sister, my bride; you have enchanted my heart. Yes, you have enchanted my heart] (See: **Information Structure (p.217)**)

You have enchanted my heart, & you have enchanted my heart

The phrase translated as **You have enchanted my heart** is an idiom which could mean: (1) to steal or capture a person’s heart. In Jewish thinking, the heart was the center of a person’s thinking. This phrase probably also meant that he was so in love that he could not think clearly. If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, you could use a comparable phrase from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [You have captured my heart … you have captured my heart] or [It is as though you have captured my heart … it is as though you have captured my heart] or [You have made me feel so in love with you that it is as if I have lost my mind … you have made me feel so in love with you that it is as if I have lost my mind] (2) the woman had made the man’s heart beat faster. Alternate translation: [You have caused my heart to beat fast … you have caused my heart to beat fast] (3) that the woman had encouraged the man’s heart. Alternate translation: [You have encouraged my heart … you have encouraged my heart] or [You have given me heart … you have given me heart] (See: **Idiom (p.212)**)

my sister

Here the man is speaking of the woman as if she were his **sister**. This is a term of endearment which expresses affection, close companionship, and a deep emotional bond between the lovers. The woman is not actually his sister. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different term of endearment or state the meaning plainly. (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

Song of Solomon 4:10

How & How

Here the word **How** is used as an exclamation to emphasize two statements about how wonderful the woman's love is. Use an exclamation that would communicate that meaning in your language. (See: **Exclamations (p.192)**)

my sister

See how you translated the phrase **my sister** in 4:9. (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

How your love is beautiful, my sister, {my} bride! How your love {is} better than wine

If it would be more natural in your language, you could change the order of these phrases. Alternate translation: [My sister, my bride; how your love is beautiful! How your love is better than wine] (See: **Information Structure (p. 217)**)

How your love is beautiful, & How your love {is} better than wine

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **love**, you could express the same idea in another way. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.148)**)

your oils {is better

Here, **oils** refers to perfumes. In the author's culture, pleasant-smelling spices were mixed into olive oil in order to make perfume which was put on the skin. You could include this information if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [your scented oils are better] or [the perfumed oils on your skin are better] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

your oils {is better

The writer is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You could supply the words **is better** from earlier in the sentence if it would be clearer in your language. (See: **Ellipsis (p.187)**)

Song of Solomon 4:11

Your lips drip {with} nectar

Here the woman's **lips** refer to the kisses from her lips. The man says that her **lips drip with nectar** to indicate the pleasantness of her kisses. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Your kisses are so pleasant that it is as if your lips drip with nectar] or [Your kisses are delightfully sweet] or [Being kissed by you is as enjoyable as eating honey] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

nectar

The word translated as **nectar** refers specifically to honey which drips or flows from a honeycomb. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly by translating it as "honey". (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

honey and milk {are} under your tongue

The phrase **honey and milk are under your tongue** could mean: (1) that the taste of the woman's kisses were as pleasant as milk and honey. Alternate translation: [your kisses are like milk and honey to me] or [your kisses are as pleasant and delightful as milk and honey] (2) that the woman's words were as pleasant as milk and honey. Alternate translation: [your words are as pleasant as milk and honey] (3) that both the woman's kisses and her words were as pleasant as milk and honey. Alternate translation: [the kisses from your mouth and your words are as pleasant as milk and honey to me] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

and the smell of your garments {is} like the smell of Lebanon

Lebanon is known for its forests of cedar trees. Cedar trees have a very pleasant smell. The phrase **the smell of your garments is like the smell of Lebanon** probably means that the woman's clothes smelled like cedar wood. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [and the smell of your garments is like the smell of Lebanon's pleasant-smelling cedar] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

Song of Solomon 4:12

A locked garden {is} my sister, {my} bride, a locked spring, a sealed fountain

If it would be more natural in your language, you could change the order of these phrases. Alternate translation: [My sister, my bride; you are a locked garden, a locked spring, a sealed fountain] (See: **Information Structure (p. 217)**)

A locked garden {is} my sister, {my} bride

The man is speaking of the woman as if she were a **locked garden**. He uses **garden** as a poetic way of referring to the woman herself, and by saying she is a **locked garden** he means that the woman is both beautiful and seemingly inaccessible like a locked garden. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [You are like a locked garden, my sister, my bride] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

A locked garden {is} my sister, {my} bride

The word translated as **garden** refers to a large, enclosed area where bushes, flowers, plants, and trees grow. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of garden, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [A locked park where many trees and plants grow is my sister, my bride] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

my sister

See how you translated the phrase **my sister** in 4:9. (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

a locked spring, a sealed fountain

The man continues to draw an extended comparison between the woman he loves and a garden by speaking of her as if she were **a locked spring** and **a sealed fountain** within a locked garden. The man means that the woman's body is beautiful and inaccessible like a locked spring or a sealed fountain. You could explain this comparison if it would be helpful to your readers. If you used the alternate translation, "You are like a locked garden, my sister, my bride", then you should use the alternate translation which follows. Alternate translation: [you are like a locked spring; you are like a sealed fountain] (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p. 161)**)

a locked spring, a sealed fountain

The phrases **a locked spring** and **a sealed fountain** mean basically the same thing. The second phrase emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea using different words. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine the phrases and show the emphasis in some other way. (See: **Parallelism (p.235)**)

Song of Solomon 4:13

Your shoots {are

The word translated as **shoots** refers to the stems and roots that come out (shoot out) from trees and plants. The word **shoots** is used here to refer to the woman so if it would be helpful to your readers, you could translate the phrase **Your shoots** as “You”. Alternately, you could translate it with a more general term that your language uses to speak of what grows out of plants and trees. Alternate translation: [Your sprouts are] (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.161)**)

שְׁלָחַ יִךְ פַּרְדֵּ ס רִמּוֹנִ ים עִ ם פְּרִ י מְגָדִ ים כְּפָרִ ים עִם־נְרָדִים: נֵ רְדְּ | וְכַרְכֹּ ם קָנֶה וְקִנָּמ וֹן עִ ם כָּל־עֲצֵ י לְבוֹנָ ה מֹ ר וַאֲהָל וֹת עִ ם כָּל־רָאשֵׁ י בְשָׂמִים

The man continues to draw an extended comparison between these plants and the woman by speaking of her as if she were **an orchard of pomegranate trees** and various other spices, pleasant-smelling plants, and trees in the “locked garden” (4:12). If you translated 4:12 using the words “You are like,” then you should also do that here. Alternate translation: [You are like an orchard of pomegranate trees with delicious fruits; henna with nard, nard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes with all the best spices] (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.161)**)

שְׁלָחַ יִךְ פַּרְדֵּ ס רִמּוֹנִ ים עִ ם פְּרִ י מְגָדִ ים כְּפָרִ ים עִם־נְרָדִים: נֵ רְדְּ | וְכַרְכֹּ ם קָנֶה וְקִנָּמ וֹן עִ ם כָּל־עֲצֵ י לְבוֹנָ ה מֹ ר וַאֲהָל וֹת עִ ם כָּל־רָאשֵׁ י בְשָׂמִים

Here the man uses poetic language to describe the woman as if she is a garden where all types of pleasant plants and trees grow. These plants and trees would not normally grow in the same garden because they have different growing requirements, but because this is poetry the author places these plants in one garden to create a poetic comparison for how wonderful the woman is. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate in a footnote that the author is using plants and trees from different areas to create an image of how wonderful the woman is. (See: **Poetry (p.240)**)

כְּפָרִ ים עִם־נְרָדִים: נֵ רְדְּ

See how you translated the word **nard** in 1:12 and the word **henna** in 1:14. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

Song of Solomon 4:14

and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, & and aloes

Both **saffron**, a beautiful flowering plant that produces purple flowers, and **calamus**, a cane, were used to make a pleasant-smelling oil. The term **cinnamon** refers to a spice made from the bark of the cinnamon tree. The term **aloes** refers to the pleasant-smelling resin that comes from specific trees in Asia. If your readers would not be familiar with these types of plants, you could use the names of similar plants in your area, or you could use more general terms. Alternate translation: [and saffron flowers, calamus canes and cinnamon trees … and pleasant-smelling resins called aloes] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

Song of Solomon 4:15

a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and flowing streams from Lebanon

Here the man continues the metaphor that he began in 4:12 and speaks of the woman he loves as if she were **a fountain** in a garden, **a well of living waters**, and **flowing streams from Lebanon**. If you translated 4:12-14 using the words “You are like”, you should do that here also. See how you translated the word “garden” in 4:12. Alternate translation: [you are like a fountain of gardens, like a well of living waters, and like flowing streams from Lebanon] (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.161)**)

a fountain of gardens

The writer assumes that the readers will understand that a **fountain** refers to a spring or underground well that is dug in order to be used as a water source. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [a garden spring] or [a garden well] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 155)**)

a fountain of gardens

Here the author could be using the plural form **gardens** to: (1) designate the kind of fountain that would be found in gardens. Alternate translation: [a garden fountain] (2) designate a large garden. Alternate translation: [a fountain in a large garden] (See: **Unusual Uses of the Plural (p.270)**)

living waters

Here the term **living** means that the water is fresh and flowing. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [fresh water] or [flowing water] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

Song of Solomon 4:16

Awake, north wind, and come, south wind; blow on my garden and let its spices flow

The woman is speaking to the **wind** which she knows cannot hear her. She is doing this to communicate her strong desire that the pleasant smell of her body will flow through the air and attract the man she loves so that he will come to her. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate these words as a wish or desire. Alternate translation: [I wish that the north wind and south wind would come and blow on my garden and let its spices flow] (See: **Apostrophe (p.153)**)

and come, & Let my beloved come

Your language may say "go" rather than **come** in a context such as this. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: [and go ... Let my beloved go] (See: **Go and Come (p.202)**)

Awake, north wind, and come, south wind; blow on my garden and let its spices flow. Let my beloved come to his garden and eat its delicious fruit

Here the woman continues the "garden" metaphor (from 4:12) by referring to her body as **my garden** and then **his garden**. The woman calls to the wind to blow on her **garden** so that **its spices flow** into the air and attract the man she loves. She invites him to **come to his garden** (a poetic way of inviting him to come and enjoy her body). You should translate the term **garden** here the same way you did in 4:12 because both uses refer to the woman's body. In 4:13 the man spoke of her body as "an orchard of pomegranate trees with delicious fruits," and here the woman invites the man to **come to his garden and eat its delicious fruit**. If you translated 4:12-15 as a comparison, you should also translate the sentence **Let my beloved come to his garden and eat its delicious fruit** as a comparison. (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.161)**)

and let its spices flow

Alternate translation: [and carry the pleasant smell of its spices through the air] or [and make the pleasant smell of its spices flow through the air]

Song of Solomon 5

Song of Songs 5 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

5:1 The conclusion of the garden metaphor

5:2-8 The theme of longing and searching

5:9 The women of Jerusalem ask the young woman why she thinks the man she loves is special

5:10-16 The woman responds to the question the young women of Jerusalem asked her

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

The attractiveness of the man

The woman describes the man as the epitome of male attractiveness in 5:10-16.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Metaphors

As the author has done throughout this book so far, he continues to use metaphors to describe feelings and events that are common to romantic relationships. (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

Order of events

5:2-8 seems to describe events that would have chronologically and logically occurred before the events described in 3:6-5:1. The solution to this seeming problem is to understand that this book is poetry and because the author is using poetry to describe the couple's romantic relationship and its associated feelings, he does not need to follow the conventions of chronological story telling.

Whether 5:2-8 describes events that really happened or that happened in a dream.

There are two main views among Bible scholars regarding the events described in 5:2-8. One view is that the events which 5:2-8 describe happened in a dream. The other view is that the events that 5:2-8 describe happened after the man awakened the women from sleeping or from being nearly asleep. The vast majority of Bible scholars think that the first view is correct and that the events described in 5:2-8 happened in a dream.

The "sister" metaphor

The phrase "my sister" is used in 4:9, 4:10, 4:12, 5:1, and 5:2. The man uses this phrase as a term of endearment for the woman he loves. The woman is not actually his sister. You should translate this phrase in 5:1 and 5:2 the same way you translated it in 4:9, 4:10, and 4:12, because the author uses it with the same meaning here. See the note at the first occurrence of this phrase in 4:9 for more information.

An alternate translation possibility for the word the ULT translates as “towers of” in 5:13

In verse 13, the ULT follows the standard Hebrew text by saying “towers of.” However, as a footnote in the ULT indicates, many biblical scholars believe that the original reading was more likely “yielding.” Consider using that reading in your translation. If “yielding” is used in place of “towers of” then the first portion of 5:13 in the ULT would read “His cheeks {are} like a bed of spices, yielding herbal spices” (and The UST would read “His cheeks are like a garden where spices grow that produce sweet-smelling perfume”). The phrase “yielding herbal spices” would then be further describing the phrase “a bed of spices.” The point of the comparison would be that the man’s cheeks smell like a garden bed of spices which yields herbal spices. If you choose to use the word “yielding” in your translation, you could explain the comparison if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [His cheeks smell like a bed of spices that produce herbal spices] or [His cheeks smell like a bed of spices that yield herbal spices]

Song of Solomon 5:1

I have come to my garden, my sister, {my} bride; I have plucked my myrrh with my spice. I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk

Here the man continues to draw an extended comparison between the woman's body and the **garden** that he began in 4:12. He accepts the woman's invitation (that she gave in the previous verse) to enjoy her body. The lines **I have plucked my myrrh with my spice** and **I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey** and **I have drunk my wine with my milk** are all metaphors for the man enjoying the woman's body. If you used the alternate translation in verses 4:12-16, you should do so here also. Alternate translation: [You who are as dear to me as a sister, my bride, I am ready to go with you and enjoy the delights of your body; it will be as though I am gathering myrrh with my other spices, eating my honey and honeycomb, and drinking my wine and my milk] (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.161)**)

I have come to my garden, my sister, {my} bride; I have plucked my myrrh with my spice. I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk

Though the man is speaking as if he has already done these things, he is actually getting ready to do them. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [I am getting ready to come to my garden, my sister, my bride; I will pluck my myrrh with my spice. I will eat my honeycomb with my honey; I will drink my wine with my milk] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

I have come

Your language may say "gone" rather than **come** in a context such as this. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: [I have gone] (See: **Go and Come (p.202)**)

I have come to my garden, my sister, {my} bride

If it would be more natural in your language, you could change the order of these phrases. Alternate translation: [My sister, my bride, I have come to my garden] (See: **Information Structure (p.217)**)

my sister

See how you translated the phrase **my sister** in 4:9. (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

Eat, friends; drink, and be drunk, beloved ones

Since the author does not say who is speaking to the couple here, you should not indicate who is speaking in the text of your translation. However, if you are using section headers to indicate who is speaking, the speakers could be: (1) the "daughters of Jerusalem" who spoke earlier in the book. They are speaking to the couple at the couple's wedding. You can use a phrase such as "The young women of Jerusalem speak to the couple" or "The young women of Jerusalem speak to the couple at their wedding" (2) a group of people who are the couple's friends and wedding guests. You can use a phrase such as "The couple's friends speak" or "The couple's wedding guests speak" (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.274)**)

Eat, friends; drink, and be drunk, beloved ones

Here the speaker is speaking of “eating and drinking” as metaphors to represent the couple enjoying their sexual union. The phrase **be drunk** is an encouragement to fully enjoy the delights of their sexual union. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express the meaning plainly, or you could use a phrase such as “drink deeply” or “drink abundantly” instead of “be drunk.” Alternate translation: [Enjoy your marital intimacy and make love until you are fully satisfied as if you are eating food until full and drinking wine freely] or [Eat, friends; Drink, and be drunk with love] or [Eat, friends; Drink, and drink abundantly of love] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

Song of Solomon 5:2

I {am} asleep, but my heart {is} awake

Here the term **heart** could represent: (1) the woman's thoughts and mental awareness which would make the phrase **my heart is awake** mean that her mind is alert and dreaming while she is sleeping. Alternate translation: [I am asleep, but my mind is dreaming] or [I am asleep, but my mind is alert and dreaming] (2) the woman's entire person which would make the phrase **my heart is awake** mean that she had been awakened after falling asleep or awakened after she was almost asleep. Alternate translation: [I was almost asleep, now I am awakened] or [I was asleep, but now I have been awakened] (See: **Metonymy (p.226)**)

A sound—my beloved is knocking

Alternate translation: [I hear a sound; it is my beloved knocking] or [I hear a sound; it is the sound of my beloved knocking on my door]

my beloved

See how you translated the phrase **my beloved** in 1:13. Alternate translation: [my lover]

my sister, my darling

See how you translated the phrase **my sister** in 4:9 and the phrase **my darling** in 1:9. (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

my dove

See how you translated the phrase **my dove** in 2:14. (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

because my head {is} full of dew

Here the phrase **full of** is a Hebrew expression which means "wet with." 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 you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [because my head is wet with dew] (See: **Idiom (p.212)**)

my hair {is full of

The writer is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need to be complete. You could supply the words **is full of** from the previous phrase if it would be clearer to your readers. (See: **Ellipsis (p. 187)**)

Song of Solomon 5:3

I have taken off my robe; how will I put it on? I have washed my feet; how could I get them dirty

This verse is a quotation of: (1) what the woman thought to herself. Alternate translation: [I thought to myself; I have taken off my robe; how will I put it on? I have washed my feet; how could I get them dirty?] (2) the woman speaking directly to the man. Alternate translation: [I said to the man I love; I have taken off my robe; how will I put it on? I have washed my feet; how could I get them dirty?] (See: **Quote Markings (p.250)**)

how will I put it on? I have washed my feet; how could I get them dirty

The woman is using the question form for emphasis. If you would not use the question form for this purpose in your language, you could translate this as a statement or an exclamation and express the emphasis in a way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [I do not want to put it back on! I have already washed my feet so I do not want to get them dirty again!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.254)**)

Song of Solomon 5:4

My beloved

See how you translated the phrase **my beloved** in 1:13.

and my belly roared concerning him

Here, **belly** represents the center of a person's emotions. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and my feelings for him roared] (See: **Metonymy (p.226)**)

and my belly roared concerning him

Here the term **belly** represents the woman's feelings and the woman saying that her **belly roared** is a poetic way of saying that her feelings were aroused. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and my feelings for him were aroused] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

Song of Solomon 5:5

and my hands dripped {with} myrrh and my fingers {dripped with} flowing myrrh

The two phrases **my hands dripped with myrrh** and **my fingers dripped with flowing myrrh** mean basically the same thing. The second emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words. Hebrew poetry was based on this kind of repetition, and it would be good to show this to your readers by including both phrases in your translation rather than combining them. However, if it would be helpful to your readers, you could connect the phrases with a word other than “and” in order to show that the second phrase is repeating the first one, not saying something additional. Alternate translation: [and my hands dripped with myrrh, yes, my fingers dripped with flowing myrrh] (See: **Parallelism (p.235)**)

flowing myrrh

The phrase translated as **flowing myrrh** refers to liquid myrrh. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: [liquid myrrh] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

and my fingers {dripped with

The woman is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need to be complete. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could supply the words “dripped with.” (See: **Ellipsis (p.187)**)

Song of Solomon 5:6

to my beloved, but my beloved

See how you translated the phrase **my beloved** in 1:13.

and gone

Your language may say “went” rather than **gone** in a context such as this. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: [and went away] (See: **Go and Come (p.202)**)

My soul went out

Your language may say “gone” rather than **went** in a context such as this. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: [My soul had gone out] (See: **Go and Come (p.202)**)

My soul went out

Here, **soul** represents the entire person, and the phrase **My soul went out** is a Hebrew idiom that means to feel extreme despair. If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, you could use a comparable expression from your language that has this meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [My heart sank] or [I felt great despair] (See: **Idiom (p.212)**)

because he departed

Here the word translated as **because he departed** could mean: (1) when he departed. If you choose this option, use the translation of the ULT. (2) “when he spoke.” Alternate translation: [when he spoke]

but he did not answer me

The implication is that the man did not answer because he was not there. She is not saying that he was present but not answering. You could include this information if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [but he did not answer me, since he was not there]. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

Song of Solomon 5:7

The guards going about in the city found me

See how you translated the sentence **The guards going about in the city found me** in 3:3. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

They beat me and wounded me; they lifted my shawl from me, the guards of the walls

If it would be more natural in your language, you could change the order of these phrases. Alternate translation: [The guards of the walls beat me and wounded me; they lifted my shawl from me] (See: **Information Structure (p. 217)**)

They beat me and wounded me

The reason that the city watchmen **beat** and **wounded** the woman is because they thought she was a prostitute. You could include this information if it would be helpful to your readers. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

my shawl

The word translated as **shawl** could refer to: (1) a light article of clothing like a robe or cloak that was worn as an outer garment and wrapped around the body. Alternate translation: [my cloak] (2) a large veil. Alternate translation: [my veil] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

the guards of the walls

The men called **the guards of the walls** are the same men as “The guards going about in the city” mentioned earlier in the verse. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [those guards who were going about in the city guarding the walls] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

Song of Solomon 5:8

I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem

See how you translated the phrase **I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem** in 2:7. (See: **Oath Formulas (p.231)**)

Declare to him} that sick {with} love {am} I

See how you translated the phrase **sick with love am I** in 2:5 (See: **Hyperbole (p.208)**)

Declare to him} that sick {with} love {am} I

The woman is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. (See: **Ellipsis (p.187)**)

Song of Solomon 5:9

What {is} your beloved more than {another} beloved, most beautiful among women? What {is} your beloved more than {another} beloved, that thus you adjure us

The phrase **What is your beloved more than another beloved** is repeated for emphasis. This is a common feature of Hebrew poetry, and you may want to begin a new line at the start of each parallel statement. However, if it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine them into one. Alternate translation: [What is your beloved more than another beloved, most beautiful among women, that thus you adjure us] or [Most beautiful among women, what is your beloved more than another beloved, that thus you adjure us] (See: **Poetry (p.240)**)

What {is} your beloved more than {another} beloved

Alternate translation: [What makes the man you love better than other men] or [What is so special about the man you love]

What {is} your beloved more than {another} beloved, most beautiful among women

If it would be more natural in your language, you could change the order of these phrases. Alternate translation: [Most beautiful among women, what is your beloved more than another beloved] (See: **Information Structure (p. 217)**)

most beautiful among women

See how you translated the phrase **most beautiful among women** in 1:8.

that thus you adjure us

Alternate translation: [with the result that thus you adjure us] or [with the result that you request us to promise that we tell him that] or [that would make you want to thus adjure us]

you adjure us

See how you translated the word **adjure** in the previous verse. (See: **Oath Formulas (p.231)**)

Song of Solomon 5:10

My beloved {is} shimmering and red

The words translated here as **shimmering** and **red** mean that the man's skin had a healthy glow and was a reddish-brown color. These two words used together indicate that the man's skin looked healthy and handsome. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [My beloved has radiant and healthy skin] or [My beloved's skin glows and is a handsome reddish-brown] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

distinguished among ten thousand

In the Hebrew language **ten thousand** is the highest number that was used when making comparisons, so the woman uses this number to stand for an uncountable number of people. If you have a similar expression in your culture, you could use it, or if it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [better than anyone else] or [and there is no one else like him] or [one in a million] (See: **Metaphor (p. 220)**)

Song of Solomon 5:11

His head {is} gold, refined gold

Here the woman is speaking of the man's **head** as if it were **gold**. Because she speaks of the appearance of the man's hair in the following line, she probably intends in this line to refer to his face. The phrase **refined gold** indicates that the gold is very valuable. By saying that the man's **head is gold, refined gold**, she is probably indicating that he is special and has great worth. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [His head is like gold that is refined] or [His face is beautiful and gleams like gold. He is precious and valuable like refined gold] or [His face gleams. He is precious and valuable] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

black like the raven

A **raven** is a large bird with dark black feathers. Ravens are as big as some hawks and are similar in color and appearance to crows but larger. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of bird, you could use the name of a similar bird in your area or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [black like a bird with dark black feathers] or [black like a dark black bird] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

his hairs {are} wavy, black like the raven

The writer is stating that the color of the man's hair is dark **black like the raven**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [his hair is wavy and dark black] (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

Song of Solomon 5:12

His eyes {are} like doves beside stream beds of water, bathing in milk, sitting beside the pools

In 1:15 the man said to the woman, “your eyes are doves.” Here the woman uses the word **like** and compares the man’s eyes to doves that are **bathing in milk**. The phrase **bathing in milk** refers to the color of the doves’ feathers and the man’s eyes. The two phrases **beside stream beds of water** and **sitting beside the pools** describe the doves as being by water. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [His eyes are like doves beside stream beds of water that are bathing in milk and sitting beside the pools] (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

His eyes {are} like doves beside stream beds of water, bathing in milk, sitting beside the pools

The phrases **beside stream beds of water** and **sitting beside the pools** mean basically the same thing. They both describe the doves as being by water. Hebrew poetry was based on this kind of repetition, and it would be good to show this to your readers by including both phrases in your translation rather than combining them. However, if it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine them. Alternate translation: [His eyes are like doves beside stream beds of water, bathing in milk] or [His eyes are like doves bathing in milk, sitting by the pools] (See: **Parallelism (p.235)**)

Song of Solomon 5:13

His cheeks {are} like a bed of spices, towers of herbal spices

Here the writer says that the man's **cheeks** are like a garden, or an area in a garden, used for planting spices because his cheeks smell **like a bed of spices** and are like **towers of herbal spices**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [His cheeks smell like a bed of spices and like towers that contain herbal spices] (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

like a bed of spices

Here the term translated as **bed** refers to an area in a garden used for planting. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [like an area for planting spices] or [like a garden bed of spices] or [like planters of spices] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

towers of

See the chapter five introduction for information regarding an alternate translation of the word that the ULT translates as **towers of**. (See: **Textual Variants (p.265)**)

towers of herbal spices

The woman is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: [like towers of herbal spices] or [and they are like towers of herbal spices] (See: **Ellipsis (p.187)**)

His lips {are} lilies, dripping {with} flowing myrrh

Here the woman is speaking of the man's **lips** as if they are **lilies** that are **dripping with flowing myrrh** because of the sweet smell of both lilies and myrrh, the beauty and softness of lilies, and because the man's kisses are wet like flowing myrrh. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [His lips are beautiful, fragrant, and soft. His kisses are sweet-smelling and moist] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

lilies

See how you translated **lilies** in 2:16. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

flowing myrrh

See how you translated the phrase **flowing myrrh** in 5:5. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 155)**)

Song of Solomon 5:14

His arms {are} rods of gold mounted with topaz

Here the woman is speaking of the man's **arms** as if they were **rods of gold mounted with topaz** because rods of gold were powerful, had an attractive color and a finely rounded shape; and topaz would have made the rods of gold more beautiful. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [His arms are powerful, nicely rounded, and beautiful like rods of gold mounted with topaz] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

His arms {are

The word that the ULT translates as **arms** could: (1) refer to arms in which case you can use the ULT's translation. (2) refer to "hands." Alternate translation: [His hands are]

with topaz

A **topaz** is a beautiful gemstone used in jewelry and also to decorate other things. Bible scholars are not certain exactly what stone **topaz** refers to. Many different stones have been proposed such as topaz, chrysolite, beryl and others. If your readers are familiar with these types of stone, you could use one of them, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [with beautiful stones] or [with jewels] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

his belly {is} a plate of ivory covered {with} sapphires

Here the woman is speaking of the man's **belly** as if it was **a plate of ivory covered with sapphires**. By making this comparison, she is saying that the man's belly looks especially attractive since ivory and sapphires were not only rare and costly but also quite beautiful. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [his belly is beautiful and precious] or [his belly is handsome] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

his belly {is

Alternate translation: [his stomach is]

ivory

The word **ivory** refers to the tusks of an elephant. Ivory is a white color and is very beautiful and costly. If your readers would not be familiar with ivory, you could explain this term in a footnote. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p. 267)**)

with} sapphires

The word **sapphires** refers to beautiful blue gemstones. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of stone, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [with blue gemstones] or [with beautiful blue gemstones] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

Song of Solomon 5:15

His thighs {are} pillars of alabaster set on bases of refined gold

Here the woman is speaking of the man's **thighs** as if they were **pillars of alabaster set on bases of refined gold** because the man's legs are strong and majestic looking. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [His thighs are strong and majestic like pillars of alabaster set on bases of gold] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

His thighs {are

The word the ULT translates as **thighs** most likely refers to the entirety of a person's legs, so you could translate this term as "legs" as in the UST. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

alabaster

The word translated as **alabaster** can refer to either alabaster or marble, types of strong stone that are nice looking and used to make large columns, statues, and other things. If your readers would not be familiar with alabaster or marble, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [marble] or [stone] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

his appearance {is} like Lebanon, {as} choice as the cedars

The woman is saying that the man's **appearance is like Lebanon, as choice as the cedars** because he is tall, strong, and outstanding in comparison to other men, just as the cedars of Lebanon are better than all other trees. Lebanon was famous for its cedar trees which were considered to be superior. The word **choice** here means "excellent quality." If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: [His appearance is tall and strong and stately. He is outstanding among other men] or [His appearance is majestic. He is strong and tall and better than other men] (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

Song of Solomon 5:16

His mouth {is} most sweet

Here, **mouth** could refer to: (1) the man's kisses. Alternate translation: [His kisses are most sweet] (2) the man's words. Alternate translation: [His speech is most sweet] or [The words from his mouth are most sweet] (See: **Metonymy (p.226)**)

and all of him {is} most desirable

Alternate translation: [and every part of him is very desirable]

daughters of Jerusalem

See how you translated the phrase **daughters of Jerusalem** in 1:5. (See: **Possession (p.244)**)

Song of Solomon 6

Song of Songs 6 General Notes

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Beauty

In 6:4-10 the man describes the woman he loves as the epitome of female beauty and attractiveness by using various comparisons.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Metaphors

In the ancient Near East, it was acceptable to describe a woman using comparisons to animals. In many cultures today, this can be considered offensive. Different comparisons of beauty are used in different cultures. (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

The meaning of 6:12

6:12 is very difficult to understand, and its meaning is uncertain. Therefore, Bible scholars have different opinions on the exact meaning of this verse, and of some of the words in context, and on how the words and phrases relate to each other. Published versions of the Bible differ significantly from one another in their rendering of it. The ULT seeks to offer a reasonable translation of this verse. If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, it may differ from the ULT in the way that it translates this verse. In that case, you may wish to use the rendering that it uses. If not, you may wish to follow the rendering of the ULT.

The meaning of the phrase “like the dance of two armies” in 6:13

The meaning of the phrase “like the dance of two armies” is uncertain and Bible scholars have different opinions on the exact meaning of this verse. The ULT offers one possible translation of this verse. If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, it may differ from the ULT in the way that it translates this verse. In that case, you may wish to use the translation that it uses. If not, you may wish to follow the reading of the ULT.

Song of Solomon 6:1

Where did he go, your beloved, most beautiful woman among women? Where did he turn, your beloved, and let us seek him with you

The questions **Where did he go, your beloved** and **Where did he turn, your beloved** have basically the same meaning. This question is asked twice, in slightly different ways, for emphasis and poetic effect. This type of repetition is a common feature of Hebrew poetry, and it would be good to retain this repetition if possible. However, if it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine the phrases into one. Alternate translation: [Where did he go, your beloved, most beautiful woman among women? Let us seek him with you] or [Most beautiful woman among women, where did he turn your beloved? Let us seek him with you] (See: **Parallelism (p. 235)**)

Where did he go, your beloved, & Where did he turn, your beloved

Alternate translation: [Where did your beloved go ... Where did your beloved turn]

most beautiful woman among women

See how you translated the phrase **most beautiful woman among women** in 1:8.

Where did he turn, your beloved

Alternate translation: [Which way did your beloved go]

and let us seek him with you

The women of Jerusalem are 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 the context if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [tell us, so that we can seek him with you] or [tell us, and let us seek him with you] (See: **Ellipsis (p.187)**)

Song of Solomon 6:2

My beloved went down to his garden, to the beds of spices, in order to graze in the gardens and in order to glean lilies

Here the woman resumes the “garden” metaphor that was used in 4:12-5:1 by again referring to her body as a **garden**. The phrase **graze in the gardens** and **glean lilies** are both metaphors for the man enjoying the woman’s body. If you used the word “like” to translate 4:12-5:1, you should continue to use it here, or if it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [My beloved went to me. I am like a garden where beds of spices grow. He came to me in order to enjoy my body like a gazelle enjoys grazing in gardens and like a person enjoys gleaning lilies] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

My beloved went down to his garden, to the beds of spices

The phrase **to the beds of spices** explains where in the garden the man went down to. This phrase is not describing a separate location from the **garden** (woman). If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [My beloved went down to the beds of spices in his garden] or [My beloved went to me who is like his spice garden] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

went down

Your language may say “gone” rather than **went** in a context such as this. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: [has gone down] (See: **Go and Come (p.202)**)

to the beds of spices

See how you translated the similar phrase **bed of spices** in 5:13.

in the gardens

Here the phrase **in the gardens** refers to the woman just like the phrase **his garden** does earlier in the verse. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [in his gardens] or [in his garden] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

Song of Solomon 6:3

I {belong} to my beloved, and my beloved {belongs} to me

See how you translated the similar phrase “My beloved belongs to me and I belong to him” in 2:16. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.196)**)

he grazes among the lilies

See how you translated the similar phrase “the man grazing among the lilies” in 2:16. (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

Song of Solomon 6:4

You {are} beautiful, my darling, like Tirzah, lovely like Jerusalem

The man is saying that the woman is **like** the city of **Tirzah** and **like** the city of **Jerusalem** because both of these cities were beautiful. These lines are parallel, and both mean basically the same thing. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternately, you could combine the lines if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [You are beautiful, my darling, like the beautiful city of Tirzah, lovely like the lovely city of Jerusalem] or [You are beautiful and lovely, my darling, like the cities of Tirzah and Jerusalem] (See: **Simile (p. 258)**)

You {are} beautiful, my darling

See how you translated the phrase "you are beautiful, my darling" in 1:15.

You {are} beautiful, my darling, like Tirzah

If it would be more natural in your language, you could change the order of these phrases. Alternate translation: [My darling, you are beautiful like Tirzah] (See: **Information Structure (p.217)**)

lovely like Jerusalem, awe-inspiring like bannered armies

The man 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 the context if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [you are lovely like Jerusalem; you are awe-inspiring like bannered armies] (See: **Ellipsis (p.187)**)

awe-inspiring like bannered armies

The man is saying that the woman is **awe-inspiring like bannered armies** because looking at her causes the man to feel a sense of awe that is comparable to seeing an army with its banners above it. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [and the awe I feel when looking at you is like the awe I would feel if I were to see armies with their banners] or [and the awe I feel when looking at you is like the awe I feel when I see armies with their banners above them] (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

like bannered armies

See how you translated the term "banner" in 2:4. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

Song of Solomon 6:5

Your hair {is} like a flock of goats that hop down from Gilead

See how you translated the similar sentence “Your hair is like a flock of goats that hop down from the slopes of Gilead” in 4:1. (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

Song of Solomon 6:6

Your teeth {are} like a flock of ewes that have come up from the washing, all of which bear twins, and there is not among them one which is bereaved

See how you translated the almost identical verse in 4:2. The only difference between this verse and 4:2 is that 4:2 has the phrase “shorn sheep” instead of **ewes**. (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

ewes

The term **ewes** refers to female sheep. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [female sheep] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

Song of Solomon 6:7

Like a slice of a pomegranate {are} your cheeks from behind your veil

See how you translated 4:3 which is identical to this verse. (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

Song of Solomon 6:8

Sixty {are} they, queens

If it would be more natural in your language, you could change the order of the words in the phrase **Sixty are they, queens**. Alternate translation: [They are sixty queens] (See: **Information Structure (p.217)**)

Sixty {are} they, queens, and eighty concubines

This is poetic language. The man is using the 3, 4 pattern that was commonly used at that time, and for emphasis he multiples the numbers 3 and 4 by the number 20. This gives the numbers **Sixty** and **eighty** that he uses to make his point. If your language has a way to indicate poetry, you could use it here. Alternate translation: [A large number of queens and a large number of concubines] or [Many queens and many concubines] (See: **Poetry (p. 240)**)

and marriageable women

See how you translated the phrase **marriageable women** in 1:3. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

and marriageable women without number

Here, **without number** is an idiom that means “more than can be counted.” 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 you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and too many marriageable women to count] or [and more marriageable women than can be counted] (See: **Idiom (p.212)**)

שִׁשִּׁ֣ים הֵ֗מָּה מְלָכ֤וֹת וּשְׁמֹנִים֙ פִּילַגְשִׁ֔ים וַעֲלָמ֥וֹת אֵ֖ין מִסְפָּֽר׃ אַחַ֣ת הִ֔יא יוֹנָתִ֖י תַּמָּתִ֑י אַחַ֣ת הִ֔יא לְאִמָּ֖הּ בָּרָ֣ה הִ֑יא לְיוֹלַדְתָּ֖הּ

This is a comparison that expresses that the woman is superior to women in a king’s royal court. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could add words that explicitly indicate that this is a comparison. Alternate translation: [When compared to sixty queens, eighty concubines, and marriageable women without number, none of them are as special as my dove; my perfect one who is special to her mother and pure to the woman who bore her] or [Even if compared to sixty queens, eighty concubines, and marriageable women without number, still none of them would be as special as my dove; my perfect one who is special to her mother and pure to the woman who bore her] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

Song of Solomon 6:9

One {is} she

Here the phrase **One is she** means “She is special” (the number **One** is used in contrast to the large numbers of other women described in the previous verse). If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [She is special] or [She is unique] or [She is special in comparison to other women] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

my dove; my perfect one

See how you translated the phrases **my dove** and **my perfect one** in 5:2. (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

one {is} she to her mother

The phrase **one is she to her mother** could mean: (1) that the woman the man loves is special to her mother (in contrast to the large numbers of other women described in the previous verse). Alternate translation: [she is special to her mother] or [her mother thinks she is special] or [her mother thinks she is unique] (2) that the woman was the only child or the only daughter of her mother. Alternate translation: [she is the only child of her mother] or [her mother’s only daughter]

pure {is} she to the woman who bore her

The phrase **pure is she to the woman who bore her** could mean: (1) that the woman was her mother’s favorite child or favorite daughter. Alternate translation: [the favorite child of the woman who bore her] or [the favorite daughter of the woman who bore her] (2) that the woman was pure or flawless in some way. Alternate translation: [flawless is she to the woman who bore her]

one {is} she to her mother; pure {is} she to the woman who bore her

If you decided that **one** means “special” here and that **pure** means “favorite” then these two lines are parallel and mean basically the same thing. The second line emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words. Hebrew poetry was based on this kind of repetition. It would be good to show this to your readers by including both phrases in your translation rather than combining them. However, if it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine these two lines into one. Alternate translation: [her mother thinks that she is very special] or [she is very special to her mother] (See: **Parallelism (p.235)**)

The daughters

Here the word **daughters** could refer to: (1) the “marriageable women” in the previous verse. Alternate translation: [The marriageable women] or [The young women of the kings court] (2) young women in general, possibly “the daughters of Jerusalem” mentioned several times earlier in the book. Alternate translation: [The young women] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

Song of Solomon 6:10

Who {is} that, the woman who looks down like {the} dawn, beautiful like the moon, pure like the sun, awe-inspiring like bannered armies

The author does not say who is speaking here so you should not indicate explicitly who is speaking in the text of your translation. However, if you are using section headers, the speaker or speakers could be: (1) the man speaking to the woman he loves. You can follow the example of the UST and include this verse under the section heading for 6:4-10 that indicates the man is speaking. (2) the "daughters," the "queens," and the "concubines" mentioned in the previous verse. You can use a phrase for the section header such as "The daughters, the queens, and the concubines praise the woman" or "The other women praise the woman" or something comparable. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.274)**)

Who {is} that, the woman who looks down like {the} dawn, beautiful like the moon, pure like the sun, awe-inspiring like bannered armies

The man is not asking for information but is using the question form for emphasis. If you would not use the question form for this purpose in your language, you could translate this as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [Look at this woman who looks down like the dawn, beautiful like the moon, pure like the sun, terrifying like the bannered army!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p. 254)**)

the woman who looks down like {the} dawn

Here the man speaks of the woman and compares her to the sun as it dawns in the morning. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the woman who shines like the sun as it rises early in the morning and brightens the sky] or [the woman who shines like the sun as it rises early in the morning and shines down from the sky] (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

the woman who looks down like {the} dawn, beautiful like the moon, pure like the sun

Here the man first says that the woman is like the sun in the morning as it dawns. He then says that her beauty is like the beauty of **the moon**. He then compares the woman's radiance to the radiance of **the sun**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state these comparisons explicitly. (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

awe-inspiring like bannered armies

See how you translated the identical phrase **awe-inspiring like bannered armies** in 6:4. (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

Song of Solomon 6:11

To the garden of {the} nut tree I went down

The speaker is using the possessive form to describe an area where walnut trees grow. If your language would not use a possessive form for this, you could clarify the relationship for your readers. Alternate translation: [To the nut tree garden I went down] or [To the place where walnut trees grow, I went down] (See: **Possession (p.244)**)

To the garden of {the} nut tree I went down

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases. Alternate translation: [I went down to the garden of the nut tree] (See: **Information Structure (p.217)**)

I went down

Your language may say “gone” rather than **went** in a context such as this. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: [I had gone down] (See: **Go and Come (p.202)**)

אֶל־גִּנַּ ת אֱגוֹז יָרַ דְתִּי לִרְא וֹת בְּאִבֵּ י הַנָּ חַל לִרְאוֹת הֲפָרְחָ ה הַגָּ פֶן הֵנֵּ צוּ הָרִמֹּנִים: לֹ א
יָדַ עְתִּי נַפְשִׁ י שָׂמַ תְנִי מַרְכְּב וֹת עַמִּי־נָדִיב

It is difficult to know who is speaking in these two verses, and Bible scholars have different opinions about who is speaking here. Because the author does not say, you should not indicate who is speaking in the text of your translation. However, if you are using section headers, the speaker could be: (1) the man in both verses. If you decide the man is speaking, you can include these two verses under the section heading for 6:4-11. (2) the woman in both verses. If you decide the woman is speaking, you can put a section header at the top of 6:11. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.274)**)

Song of Solomon 6:12

I did not know

Here the phrase ** I did not know** means “Before I realized it” or “Before I was aware.” If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: [Before I realized it] or [Before I was aware] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

my soul put me

The phrase **my soul put me** probably means that the man imagined what follows. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

among} the chariots of my people, a noble

There are many different views among Bible scholars regarding what this phrase means and what this entire verse means. The UST offers one possible interpretation for what this phrase means. See the section on 6:12 in the chapter 6 introduction for more information about how to translate this difficult verse. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

Song of Solomon 6:13

Return, return, Shulammite, return, return and let us look at you

It is difficult to know with certainty who is saying this. Because the author does not say who is speaking here, you should not indicate a speaker in the text of your translation. However, if you are using section headers, the speaker could be: (1) the young women of Jerusalem. If you decide this is who is speaking, you can indicate that with a section header. (2) friends of the man and woman. If you decide that this is who is speaking, you can place a section header indicating that. (3) the man. If you decide that this is who is speaking here, you can use a section header to indicate that. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.274)**)

Shulammite, & at the Shulammite

The word translated as **Shulammite** refers to someone who is from the town of Shulam. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [woman from Shulam … at the woman from Shulam] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

Return, return, Shulammite, return, return and let us look at you

The man is repeating the verb **return** for emphasis. If your language can repeat words for emphasis, it would be good to do that here. If not, your language may express the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [Return Shulammite, return and let us look at you] or [Please return Shulammite, and let us look at you] (See: **Reduplication (p.253)**)

Why do you look at the Shulammite like the dance of two armies

It is difficult to know with certainty who is saying this. Because the author does not say who is speaking here, you should not indicate this in the text of your translation. However, if you are using section headers to indicate who is speaking, the speaker could be: (1) the man. If you decide that the man is speaking here, you can indicate this with a section header above this part of the verse. (2) the woman speaking of herself in the third person. If you decide that the woman is speaking here, you can place a section header indicating this. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.196)**)

like the dance of two armies

The speaker is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need to be complete. You could supply these words from the context if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [like you look at the dance of two armies] or [like you would look at the dance of two armies] (See: **Ellipsis (p.187)**)

like the dance of two armies

This phrase could be translated as: (1) **like the dance of two armies** which refers to a dance that is performed as entertainment for armies. Alternate translation: [like a dance performed before armies] (2) “like the dance of Mahanaim” (3) “like two rows of dancers” or “like two companies of dancers” and mean “as you like to watch two rows of people dancing.” See the section in the chapter 6 introduction for more information about how to translate this phrase. (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

Song of Solomon 7

Song of Songs 7 General Notes

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Beauty

In 7:1-7 the man describes the woman as the epitome of female beauty and attractiveness using various comparisons.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Comparisons

There are many comparisons in this chapter. Their purpose is to describe the beauty of the woman and to describe romantic love between a man and a woman. (See: [[rc:*///ta/man/translate/figs-simile]]) and (See:[[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor]])

An alternate translation possibility for the word the ULT translates as “love” in 7:6

In verse 6 the ULT follows the standard Hebrew text by saying “love.” However, as a footnote indicates, many biblical scholars believe that the original reading was more likely “one who is loved.” Consider using that reading in your translation. If “one who is loved” is used instead of “love,” then the portion of 7:6 that the ULT translates as “love with delights!” would instead be translated “one who is loved with all your delights!”

An alternate translation possibility for the words that the ULT translates as “the lips of those who sleep” in 7:9

In verse 9 the ULT follows the standard Hebrew text by saying “the lips of those who sleep.” However, as a footnote indicates, many biblical scholars believe that the original reading was more likely “lips and teeth.” The translators of the Septuagint (the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament) thought this and translated this phrase as “my lips and my teeth.” If a Bible translation exists in your region that translates this phrase with the word “teeth” instead of “those who sleep,” consider using “lips and teeth” instead of “the lips of those who sleep” in your translation.

Song of Solomon 7:1

How your feet are beautiful in sandals, daughter of a noble! The curves of your thighs {are} like ornaments, the work of the hands of a craftsman

If you are using section headers to indicate who is speaking, and you decided in the previous verse that the woman said the words “Why do you look at the Shulammite like the dance of two armies,” you will need to place a section header above this verse indicating that the man is now speaking. The man begins speaking directly to the woman in this verse and continues speaking to her until part way through 7:9. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.274)**)

How

How is an exclamation that is emphasizing how **beautiful** the woman’s **feet** are in **sandals**. Use an exclamation that would communicate this meaning in your language. (See: **Exclamations (p.192)**)

How your feet are beautiful in sandals, daughter of a noble

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases. Alternate translation: [Daughter of a noble, how your feet are beautiful in sandals] (See: **Information Structure (p.217)**)

daughter of a noble

This phrase could: (1) be translated as **daughter of a noble** and refer to the daughter of a nobleman (a man of high social status). Alternate translation: [daughter of a nobleman] (2) be translated as “noble daughter” and mean that she had noble character. Alternate translation: [noble daughter] or [woman of noble character] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

The curves of your thighs {are} like ornaments, the work of the hands of a craftsman

The man is saying that the **curves** of the woman’s thighs are like **ornaments** made by a skilled **craftsman** because she is very beautiful. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [The curves of your thighs have an attractive shape, like ornaments that are made by the hands of a craftsman] or [The curves of your thighs are beautiful, like the lovely curves of jewels made by a skilled craftsman] (See: **Simile (p. 258)**)

the work of the hands of a craftsman

The phrase **the work of the hands of a craftsman** further describes the **ornaments**. Hebrew poetry often used this kind of parallel statement, in which the second line gives additional information. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could connect these two parallel phrases with the words “which are” to show that this phrase is describing the **ornaments** and not introducing something new. Alternate translation: [which are the work of the hands of a craftsman] (See: **Parallelism (p.235)**)

the work of the hands of a craftsman

The man is using **the hands** to represent all of the **craftsman** in the act of making ornaments. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the work of a craftsman] or [which a craftsman has made] (See: **Synecdoche (p.263)**)

Song of Solomon 7:2

Your navel {is} the rounded bowl— that never lacks spiced wine

The man is speaking of the woman's shapely **navel** as if it were a **rounded bowl** used for serving wine. The phrase **that never lacks spiced wine** describes what is inside the rounded bowl. It probably means that, as **spiced wine** excites the man and gives him joy, so her navel excites him and gives him joy. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain the comparison. Alternate translation: [Your navel is beautifully rounded and causes me to feel excited] or [Your navel is beautifully rounded like a wine bowl, and it causes me to feel excited like drinking spiced wine] or [Your navel is beautifully rounded like a bowl and gives me joy and excitement like when I drink spiced wine] (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.161)**)

never lacks spiced wine

The phrase that the ULT translates as **never lacks** could be: (1) an assertion and be translated as modeled by the ULT. (2) a strong wish. Alternate translation: [I hope never lacks spiced wine] or [I hope may never lack spiced wine]

spiced wine

The phrase **spiced wine** refers to wine that is mixed with spices. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of wine, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [wine that people have added spices to] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

Your belly {is} a heap of wheat encircled with the lilies

The man continues to draw an extended comparison. He compares her **belly** to **a heap of wheat**, a food that satisfies hunger just as the woman satisfies him. The comparison extends to her shape which is soft and curved just like a heap of wheat. He also compares the color of her belly to wheat since a **heap of wheat** is a golden beige or tan color. The phrase **encircled with the lilies** describes the heap of wheat and probably means that, just as **a heap of wheat encircled with the lilies** looks beautiful, so her belly is beautiful. If it would be helpful in your language, you could explain these comparisons. Alternate translation: [Your belly is as beautiful as a heap of wheat that is encircled with lilies, and it satisfies me] or [The shape and color of your belly is beautiful] or [Your belly is beautiful and satisfying] (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.161)**)

encircled with the lilies

Alternate translation: [which has lilies all around it]

Song of Solomon 7:3

Your two breasts {are} like two fawns, twins of a gazelle

See how you translated the almost identical statement in 4:5. (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

Song of Solomon 7:4

Your neck {is} like a tower of ivory

The man is saying that the woman's **neck** is like a **tower** that is adorned with **ivory** (not made of ivory) because the woman's neck is beautiful, tall, and slender. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [Your neck is beautiful and slender] or [Your neck is beautiful and tall like a tower that people have adorned with ivory] or [Your neck is lovely and tall like a tower decorated with ivory] (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

ivory

See how you translated the term **ivory** in 5:14. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

Your eyes {are} pools in Heshbon by the gate of Bath Rabbim

The man is speaking of the woman's **eyes** as if they were clear **pools** of water in the city of **Heshbon**. The man does not say how the woman's eyes are like **pools in Heshbon**. It may be that the woman's eyes sparkle or shine in the light like when light shines on water, that her eyes look mysterious and deep (and possibly dark) like a deep pool of water, or that her eyes reflect light like a pool of water. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Your eyes shine like the sun reflecting off the pools in Heshbon by the gate of Bath Rabbim] or [Your eyes are deep and mysterious like the pools in Heshbon by the gate of Bath Rabbim] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

in Heshbon

The word **Heshbon** is the name of a city. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.204)**)

by the gate of Bath Rabbim

Bath Rabbim is the name of this gate. Alternate translation: [by the gate called Bath Rabbim] or [by the gate that people call Bath Rabbim] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.204)**)

Your nose {is} like the tower of Lebanon, looking {to the} face of Damascus

The man is saying that the woman's **nose** is like **the tower of Lebanon** that faces toward the city of **Damascus** because the woman's nose was high and/or long (attractive in that culture) and beautiful and made her look dignified and impressive like **the tower of Lebanon**. This tower was high and was used as a military watch tower. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: [Your nose is beautiful and makes you look dignified] or [Your nose is long and beautiful like the tower in Lebanon that faces Damascus] or [Your nose is high and beautiful like the tower in Lebanon that faces Damascus] (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

Song of Solomon 7:5

Your head on you {is} like Carmel

The man is saying that the woman's head is beautiful and majestic like Mount **Carmel** and it increases the beauty of the rest of her body. Mount Carmel is a beautiful and majestic looking mountain and adds beauty to what is below it. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [Your head is beautiful and majestic like Mount Carmel] (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

like Carmel

Carmel refers to the mountain called Mount Carmel. You could include this information if it would be helpful to your readers. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

and the loose hair of your head {is} like purple

Here the word **purple** refers to wool cloth that was dyed a purple-red color. The phrase **the loose hair of your head is like purple** could mean: (1) that the woman's hair was a shiny black that reflected a black-purplish color in sunlight. Alternate translation: [and the loose hair of your head is shiny and black] or [and the loose hair of your head looks shiny purplish black as the sun shines on it] (2) that the woman's hair made her look like a queen (purple was associated with royalty). Alternate translation: [and the loose hair of your head is like royal cloth] (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

a king is held captive in the tresses

The man is speaking of the beauty of the **tresses** of the woman's hair as if they could capture **a king** because the woman's tresses are so beautiful that they captivate his attention. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Your tresses are so beautiful that a king is not able to stop admiring them] or [Your hair is so beautiful that a king is not able to stop admiring it] or [the king is captivated by your tresses] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

a king is held captive

The implication is that the man speaking here is the **king**. You could include this information if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [your king is held captive] or [I, your king, am held captive] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

a king is held captive in the tresses

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, the context implies that the woman's **tresses** did it. Alternate translation: [the tresses hold the king captive] or [your tresses hold the king captive] (See: **Active or Passive (p.150)**)

in the tresses

Here the writer assumes his readers will understand that **tresses** refers to the woman's hair which hangs down from her head. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [in the long locks of your hair] or [in the flowing locks of your hair] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

Song of Solomon 7:6

How you are beautiful

See how you translated the similar phrase “You are beautiful” in 6:4. (See: **Exclamations (p.192)**)

How you are beautiful and how you are lovely

This is an exclamation that is emphasizing the beauty and loveliness of the woman. Use an exclamation that would communicate that meaning in your language. (See: **Exclamations (p.192)**)

love

See the chapter seven introduction for information regarding an alternate translation of the word **love**.

love with delights

The man is praising the delightfulness of romantic love. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [romantic love has many delights] or [how delightful romantic love is] or [romantic love is very delightful] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

love with delights

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **love**, you could express the same idea in another way. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.148)**)

Song of Solomon 7:7

This is your height—it is like a palm tree

The man is saying that the woman is tall like a **palm tree**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [You are tall] (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

a palm tree, & like its} clusters

A **palm tree** refers to a date palm, which is tall, thin, and produces small fruits called dates. The term **clusters** refers to bunches of dates that grow on the date palm. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of tree or its fruit, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [a tall and slender fruit tree … its clusters of fruit] or [a tall fruit tree … like its clusters of delicious fruit] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

and your breasts {like its} clusters

The man is saying that the woman's **breasts** are like the **clusters** of plump dates that grow on date palms. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [and your breasts are plump and round] or [and your breasts are plump and round like its clusters] (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

Song of Solomon 7:8

I said, “I will go up {the} palm tree; I will grab hold of its fruit stalks

Here the man is speaking of the woman as if she were **the palm tree** and her breasts as if they were **fruit stalks**. The man speaks of his desire to caress and be intimate with her by saying **I will grab hold of its fruit stalks**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [I will go to the woman I love and caress her breasts and enjoy being intimate with her] or [I will go to the woman I love and enjoy touching her breasts and being close to her] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

I said

Here the phrase **I said** means that the man said or thought to himself, **I will go up the palm tree; I will grab hold of its fruit stalks**. You could include this information if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [I thought to myself] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

the} palm tree

See how you translated **palm tree** in the previous verse. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

I will go up {the} palm tree; I will grab hold of its fruit stalks

The man is using a future statement to indicate his intent or desire to do something. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate these words using a command or instruction form. Alternate translation: [I want to go up the palm tree; I want to grab hold of its fruit stalks] or [I have determined to go up the palm tree and grab hold of its fruit stalks] (See: **Statements — Other Uses (p.261)**)

I will go up

Your language may say “come” rather than **go** in a context such as this. Alternate translation: [I will come up] (See: **Go and Come (p.202)**)

And, please, let your breasts be like the clusters of the vine, and {let the} smell of your nose {be} like apples

The phrases **let your breasts be like the clusters of the vine** and **let the smell of your nose be like apples** are both comparisons. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [And, please, let your breasts be sweet and enjoyable like the clusters of the vine, and let the smell of your breath be pleasant like the pleasant smell of apples] (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

And, please, let your breasts be & and {let the} smell of

The man is expressing a wish or desire. You could include this information if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [And, please, may your breasts be … and may the smell of] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

like the clusters of the vine

The phrase **like the clusters of the vine** refers to clusters of grapes that grow on grapevines. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [like the clusters of the grapevine] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

and {let the} smell of your nose {be} like apples

Here, **nose** represents breath. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and let the smell of your breath be like apples] or [and let the smell of the breath coming from your nose be like apples] (See: **Metonymy (p.226)**)

and {let the} smell of

The man is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need to be complete. You could supply the words “let the” if it would be clearer in your language. (See: **Ellipsis (p.187)**)

be} like apples

An apple is a round hard fruit that has a sweet taste and a pleasant smell. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of fruit, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [be like sweet fruit] or [be like fragrant fruit] or [be like fruit] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

Song of Solomon 7:9

and {let} your mouth {be} like the best wine. Going down for my beloved smoothly, gliding over the lips of those who sleep

The man is saying that the woman's kisses (**mouth**) are like **wine** because both are pleasant tasting and have a powerful effect on the body. The woman continues this comparison. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [and let your mouth be pleasant tasting and intoxicating like the best wine. May my mouth be like pleasant and intoxicating wine which goes down to my beloved smoothly, gliding over the lips of those who sleep] (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

and {let} your mouth {be

The man is expressing a wish or desire. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [and may your mouth be] (See: **Statements — Other Uses (p.261)**)

and {let} your mouth {be

Here, **mouth** represents the kisses which come from the woman's mouth. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and let your kisses be] (See: **Metonymy (p.226)**)

Going down for my beloved smoothly, gliding over the lips of those who sleep

Some Bible scholars think the speaker in this part of the verse: (1) is the woman. Because the author does not say who is speaking here, you should not indicate the speaker explicitly in the text. However, if you are using section headers, you can indicate that the woman is now speaking. (2) continues to be the man. If you decide that the man is still speaking, you do not need a header above this portion, but if you are using headers, you will need a header above the next verse indicating that the woman is speaking (since Bible scholars agree that the speaker is the woman beginning in 7:10 and continuing through at least 8:3). (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.274)**)

Going down for my beloved smoothly

Your language may say "Coming" rather than **Going** in a context such as this. Alternate translation: [Coming down for my beloved smoothly] (See: **Go and Come (p.202)**)

Going down for my beloved smoothly, gliding over the lips of those who sleep

Going down and **gliding** both refer to the wine mentioned earlier in the verse. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [Wine, which is going down to my beloved smoothly, gliding over the lips of those who sleep] or [Wine, which is going down to my beloved smoothly; wine, which is gliding over the lips of those who sleep] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

smoothly, gliding over

Here the word **smoothly** means "freely" and refers to freely flowing wine. The word **gliding** here means "flowing." If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [freely, flowing over] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

the lips of those who sleep

See the chapter 7 introduction for information regarding an alternate translation of the words that the ULT translates as **the lips of those who sleep**.

Song of Solomon 7:10

I {belong} to my beloved

See how you translated the identical phrase in Song of Songs 6:3.

Song of Solomon 7:11

Come

Your language may say “Go” rather than **Come** in a context such as this. Alternate translation: [Go] (See: **Go and Come (p.202)**)

Come, my beloved

If it would be more natural in your language, you could change the order of these phrases. Alternate translation: [My beloved, come] (See: **Information Structure (p.217)**)

let us spend the night in the villages

Alternate translation: [and let us stay overnight in a village somewhere]

in the villages

The word which the ULT translates as **in the villages** has two possible meanings in the original language. Here it could mean: (1) **in the villages** as in the ULT. (2) “among the henna bushes” (which produce flowers). If you choose this option, see how you translated the phrase “henna blossoms” in 1:14. Alternate translation: [among the henna bushes] or [among the wildflowers] or [among the henna blossoms] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

Song of Solomon 7:12

Let us go early

Alternate translation: [Let us wake up early and go] or [Let us get up early and go]

Let us go early

Your language may say “come” rather than **go** in a context such as this. Alternate translation: [Let us come early] (See: **Go and Come (p.202)**)

the vine has budded

See how you translated the similar phrase “had the vine budded” in 6:11.

if} the pomegranates have bloomed

See how you translated the similar phrase “Had the pomegranates bloomed” in 6:11.

I will give my love to you

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **love**, you could express the same idea in another way as modeled by the UST. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.148)**)

Song of Solomon 7:13

The mandrakes give off a scent

The **mandrakes** are plants which produce pleasant-smelling flowers. People in that culture thought that smelling or eating fruit from the mandrake plant would arouse a person's sexual desire and would help women to conceive children. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of plant, you could use the name of a similar plant in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [The love flowers give off their scent] or [The scent of the love flowers is in the air] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

and over our doors {are} all choice fruits, new ones and also old ones. My beloved, I have stored {these} up for you

Here the woman is speaking of her love for the man as if it were **all choice fruits** that she has **stored up ** (reserved) for him. She also speaks of the pleasure they will enjoy together when they express their love as** all choice fruits **stored** over our doors**. (In that culture fruit was often kept on a shelf above doors). If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and we are surrounded by delightful pleasures, new ones and old ones, pleasures that I have been saving to give to you, my beloved] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

and over our doors {are} all choice fruits

Alternate translation: [and above the entrance of our house are every one of the best fruits]

new ones and also old ones

Here, **new ones and also old ones** is an idiom which means "all kinds of fruit." **New ones** refer to fruit which isn't yet ripe and **old ones** refer to ripe fruit. 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: [fruit that is not yet ripe and also sweet ripe fruit] or [all kinds of fruit] (See: **Idiom (p.212)**)

My beloved, I have stored {these} up for you

Alternate translation: [My beloved, I have saved these so that I can give them to you] or [My beloved, I have saved my love so that I can give it to you]

Song of Solomon 8

Song of Songs 8 General Notes

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Strong feelings of love and commitment between a man and woman who love each other romantically

8:6-7 describe the strong feelings of love, commitment, and emotional attachment that exist between a man and woman who love each other romantically.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

The meaning of 8:12

The three possible meanings of 8:12 are: (1) that the woman is speaking of herself as a vineyard and saying that her vineyard is hers alone. She is comparing herself to Solomon's vineyard (discussed in 8:11) and saying that Solomon and his vineyard keepers can keep the profits from that vineyard. (2) that the woman is speaking of herself as a vineyard but saying that she chooses to give herself freely to the man whom she loves and calls Solomon. (3) that the man is speaking of the woman he loves as a vineyard and is comparing his vineyard to Solomon's vineyard. He feels wealthier than Solomon because he has the woman he loves as his vineyard, and so Solomon and Solomon's keepers can keep their portion of the profits from that vineyard.

Song of Solomon 8:1

Who will give you like a brother to me, who nursed at the breasts of my mother

Here the woman is using the Hebrew idiom **Who will give you** to express her wish that the man she loves be **like a brother** to her (so that she could publicly kiss him). 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 you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [How I wish that you were like a brother to me, who nursed at the breasts of my mother] or [How I desire that you were like a brother to me, who nursed at the breasts of my mother] (See: **Idiom (p.212)**)

Who will give you like a brother to me, who nursed at the breasts of my mother

The woman is referring implicitly to cultural norms which prohibited a display of public affection toward a spouse and/or a romantic partner but allowed siblings to show affection in public. If it would be helpful in your language, you could include this information in a footnote. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

Who will give you like a brother to me, who nursed at the breasts of my mother

The phrase **who nursed at the breasts of my mother** describes the word **brother** and has a similar meaning. This is poetic language. Saying the same thing in slightly different ways is a common feature of Hebrew poetry. If your language has a way to indicate poetry, you could use it here. Alternate translation: [Who will give you like a brother to me] (See: **Poetry (p.240)**)

Yes

Here the word **Yes** is used to strongly affirm what follows it in this sentence. Use a natural form that would communicate that meaning in your language. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

they would not despise me

The woman is saying that if the man she loved were **like a brother** and she found him **outside** and kissed him, the result is that **they would not despise me**. Use a natural form in your language for expressing a statement like this. Alternate translation: [then they would not despise me] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.175)**)

אָמְצָאֲךָ בַחוּץ אֶשָּׁקְךָ גַּם לֹא־יָבוּזוּ לִי: אֲנַהֲגֲךָ אֲבִיאֲךָ אֶל־בֵּית אִמִּי תְּלַמְּדֵנִי אַשְׁקְךָ מִיַּיִן הָרֶקַח מֵעֲסִיס רִמֹּנִי

The woman is using a hypothetical situation (the situation of the man being **like a brother** and her finding him **outside**) to express what she would do if the man she loved were like a brother to her. Alternate translation: [If you were like a brother to me and if I found you outside, then I would kiss you. Yes, if you were like a brother to me, they would not despise me. If you were like a brother to me, then I would lead you; I would bring you to the house of my mother who taught me, and I would make you drink from the wine of spice, from the juice of my pomegranate] (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.173)**)

Song of Solomon 8:2

I would bring you to the house of my mother

See how you translated the similar phrase **I had brought him to the house of my mother** in 3:4. Alternate translation: [I would take you to the house of my mother] (See: **Go and Come (p.202)**)

I would bring you to the house of my mother, she {who} taught me

Alternate translation: [I would bring you to the house of my mother who taught me]

I would make you drink from the wine of spice

The phrase **I would make you drink from the wine of spice** means "I would cause you to drink (by giving you) spiced wine." If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include that information. Alternate translation: [I would cause you to drink spiced wine] or [I would give you spiced wine to drink] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

from the wine of spice

See how you translated the similar phrase "spiced wine" in 7:2. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

I would make you drink from the wine of spice, from the juice of my pomegranate

The woman is politely and poetically referring to giving herself sexually to the man by using the phrase **I would make you drink from the wine of spice** and drink **from the juice of my pomegranate**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a polite way of referring to this in your language, or you could state this plainly. Alternate translation: [I will give myself to you as if I were making you drink from the wine of spice and pomegranate juice] or [I will give myself to you as if I were giving you spiced wine to drink and giving you pomegranate juice to enjoy] (See: **Euphemism (p.190)**)

from the juice of my pomegranate

Here the term the ULT translates as **juice** refers to fresh new wine that is sweet. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [from my fresh pomegranate wine] or [from my sweet pomegranate wine] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

Song of Solomon 8:3

His left hand {is} under my head and his right hand embraces me

This verse is identical to Song of Songs 2:6. Translate this verse exactly as you translated 2:6. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

Song of Solomon 8:4

I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, do not awaken and do not stir love until it desires

You should translate this verse in a similar way to how you translated Song of Songs 2:7, but because this verse does not have the phrase “by the female gazelles or the does of the field,” you should not include that phrase in this verse. (See: **Oath Formulas (p.231)**)

Song of Solomon 8:5

Who {is} that coming up from the wilderness, leaning against her beloved

The author does not say who is speaking here so you should not indicate who you think is speaking explicitly in the text of your translation. However, if you are using section headers to indicate who is speaking, the speakers here are most likely the “daughters of Jerusalem” who spoke several times earlier in the book and who were addressed in the previous verse. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.274)**)

Who {is} that coming up from the wilderness, leaning against her beloved

The writer is using the question form, **Who is that**, to create a sense of expectation and interest. If you would not use the question form for this purpose in your language, you could translate these words as a statement or an exclamation. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.254)**)

coming up

The writer assumes that his readers understand that the group of people **coming up from the wilderness** to Jerusalem must travel upward because the wilderness is low in the Jordan valley and Jerusalem is built on hills. You could include this information if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [moving upward] or [arising] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

coming up

Your language may say “going” rather than **coming** in a context such as this. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: [going up] (See: **Go and Come (p.202)**)

the apple tree

See how you translated the phrase **apple tree** in 2:3. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

was in labor {with} you

The phrase the ULT translates as **was in labor with you** could: (1) refer to the process of a mother being in labor and be translated as the ULT models. (2) refer to the act of conception. Alternate translation: [conceived you]

תַּ חַת הַתַּפּ וּחַ עוֹרַרְתִּ יךָ שָּׁ מָּה חִבְּלָ תְךָ אִמֶּ ךָ שָּׁ מָּה חִבְּלָ ה יְלָדָתְךָ: שִׂימֵ נִי כָחוֹתָ ם
עַל־לִבֶּ ךָ כָּחוֹתָם עַל־זְרוֹעֶ ךָ כִּי־עַזָּ ה כַמָּ וֶת אַהֲבָ ה קָשָׁ ה כִשְׁא וֹל קִנְאָ ה רְשָׁפָ יהָ רִשְׁפֵ י
אֵ שׁ שַׁלְהֶ בֶתְ יָה: מַ יִם רַבִּ ים ל א יוּכְלוּ לְכַבּ וֹת אֶת־הָאַהֲבָ ה וּנְהָר וֹת ל א יִשְׁטְפ וּהָ אִם־יִתֵּ ן
אִ יש אֶת־כָּל־ה וֹן בֵּיתוֹ בָּאַהֲבָ ה בּ וֹז יָב וּז וּ לוֹ

The author does not say who is speaking here so you should not indicate who you think is speaking in the text of your translation. However, if you are using section headers to indicate who is speaking, you can place a header above this section indicating who the speaker is. Here the speaker could be: (1) the woman. (2) The man. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.274)**)

Song of Solomon 8:6

Place me like the seal on your heart

Here, **heart** could represent: (1) the chest of a person. Alternate translation: [Place me like a seal that is hung by a cord around your neck and hangs down onto your chest] (2) the emotions and thoughts of a person. Alternate translation: [Always love and think about me] or [Always love and think about me as if I were stamped onto your heart] If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language, or you could state the meaning plainly. (See: **Metonymy (p.226)**)

Place me like the seal on your heart, like the seal on your arm

The woman is saying that she wants the man she loves to be close to her **like the seal** hanging from a cord around his neck down over his **heart** (chest) and like a **seal** that is worn on his **arm**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [Please keep me very near to you] (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

like the seal on your arm

The word which the ULT translates as **arm** can refer to any part of the arm, including the wrist and hand. The phrase **the seal on your arm** refers to a seal that is worn on a bracelet on the wrist. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [like a seal worn on your wrist] or [like a seal worn on a bracelet on your wrist] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

like the seal on your arm

The speaker is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. If it would be clearer in your language, you could supply these words from earlier in the sentence. Alternate translation: [place me like the seal on your arm] (See: **Ellipsis (p.187)**)

strong like death {is} love; unyielding like Sheol {is} zeal

The phrases **strong like death is love** and **unyielding like Sheol is zeal** are comparisons because romantic **love** and **death** are both very strong and overcome a person in a powerful and irresistible way, while **Sheol** and the **zeal** of romantic love are both **unyielding**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

because strong like death {is} love

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **love**, you could express the same idea in another way that is natural in your language. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.148)**)

unyielding like Sheol {is} zeal

Here the word the ULT translates as **zeal** could: (1) have the positive meaning of the romantic fervor that lovers have for one another. Alternate translation: [unyielding like Sheol is the zeal lovers have for each other] or [the passionate feelings lovers have for one another is unyielding like Sheol] (2) refer to the negative feelings of lovers who are jealous for the affection, love, and attention of the other. Alternate translation: [unyielding like Sheol is jealousy] or [the jealousy lovers have for the love of one another is unyielding like Sheol]

unyielding like Sheol {is} zeal

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **zeal**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [lovers zealously love each other in a way that is unyielding like Sheol] or [lovers passionately love each other in a way that is unyielding like Sheol] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.148)**)

like Sheol

Here, **Sheol** represents **death**. This line is parallel in meaning to the preceding line. The woman is again referring to **death** by association with **Sheol**, which is where dead people were thought to go in that culture. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language or state the meaning plainly. (See: **Metonymy (p.226)**)

Its flashes {are} flashes of fire, the flame of Yah

Here the woman is speaking of the zeal of romantic love as if it were **flashes of fire** and **the flame of Yah**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [The zeal of lovers is like flashes of fire and like the flame of Yahweh] or [The passion of lovers is like flashes of fire and like the flame of Yahweh] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

the flame of Yah

Here, **the flame of Yah** is an expression that means “lightning.” 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: [the lightning of Yah] or [the flashes of lightning] (See: **Idiom (p.212)**)

Song of Solomon 8:7

Many waters are not able to quench {this} love and rivers will not drown it

Here the writer is speaking of **love** as if it is a strongly burning fire which **Many waters** cannot **quench** and which **rivers** cannot **drown**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Love is so strong that it is like a strong fire that great amounts of water cannot quench and which rivers full of water cannot put out] or [The feelings of love which a man and a woman who are lovers have for each other is very strong] or [Nothing can stop romantic love] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

Many waters are not able to quench {this} love and rivers will not drown it

Alternate translation: [Nothing can extinguish our love for each other, not even a flood]

this} love & in exchange for love

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **love**, you could express the same idea in some other way that is natural in your language. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.148)**)

If a man would give all {the} wealth of his house in exchange for love, they would utterly despise it

The woman speaks as if this were a hypothetical situation, but she means that it must be true. If your language does not state something as a condition if it is certain or true, and if your readers might think that what the woman is saying is uncertain, then you could translate her words as an affirmative statement. Alternate translation: [Even though a man tries to give all the wealth of his house in exchange for love, his offer will be utterly despised] (See: **Connect — Factual Conditions (p.171)**)

in exchange for love

Alternate translation: [in order to get love] or [in order to buy love]

it

The word the ULT translates as **it** could: (1) refer to **all the wealth of his house**. Alternate translation: [it] (2) refer to the **man** who is offering **all the wealth of his house in exchange for love**. Alternate translation: [him] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

Song of Solomon 8:8

a little one

Here the phrase **a little one** means “a young one” or “a younger one.” If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [a young one] or [a younger one] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

and breasts there are not for her

The phrase **and breasts there are not for her** is an expression that means the woman’s brothers think she has not reached full physical maturity and is therefore not yet ready for marriage. If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, you could use a comparable expression that does have that meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and she is not yet fully grown] or [and her breasts are still small] or [and she is not yet ready for marriage] (See: **Idiom (p.212)**)

on the day

Here, **on the day** is an expression that means “at the time.” If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, you could use a comparable expression that does have that meaning or state the meaning plainly. (See: **Idiom (p.212)**)

on the day when it is spoken for her

The phrase **on the day when it is spoken for her** means “at the time when she is betrothed to be married.” If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [on the day when she is pledged to be married] or [on the day when she is spoken for in marriage] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

when it is spoken for her

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, the context implies that the brothers are the ones who will do it. Alternate translation: [when we speak for her by promising a man that he can marry her] (See: **Active or Passive (p.150)**)

אָח וֹת לָ נוּ קְטַנָּ ה וְשָׁדַ יִם אֵ ין לָ הּ מָה־נַּעֲשֶׂה לַאֲחֹתֵ נוּ בַּיּ וֹם שֶׁיְּדֻבַּר־בָּהּ: אִם־חוֹמָ ה הִ יא נִבְנֶ ה עָלֶ יהָ טִ ירַת כָּ סֶף וְאִם־דֶּ לֶת הִ יא נָצ וּר עָלֶ יהָ ל וּחַ אָרֶז

Since the author does not say who is speaking here, you should not indicate who you think is speaking explicitly in the text of your translation. However, the majority of Bible scholars think that the woman’s brothers are speaking. Because of this and because the phrases **A sister belongs to us** and **What will we do for our sister** in 8:8 seem to indicate that the woman’s brothers are speaking, you can place a header above 8:8-9 indicating that the woman’s brothers are speaking. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.274)**)

Song of Solomon 8:9

If she {is} a wall, we will build on her a battlement of silver

Here the woman's brothers are speaking of their sister as if she were **a wall** that they would protect by building **a battlement of silver** on it. The meaning could be: (1) that they would protect her virginity by guarding her, like a wall that has a battlement can be guarded. Alternate translation: [We will protect her virginity like we would protect a wall by building a battlement of silver on it] (2) that her chest was flat because her breasts were not fully formed, and they would try to make her attractive for the man she was going to marry by adorning her with silver jewels. Alternate translation: [If her chest is flat like a wall, we will decorate it by putting silver jewels that are like towers on it] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

And if she {is} a door, we will enclose over her boards of cedar

Here the woman's brothers are speaking of their sister as if she were **a door** that they would **enclose** with **boards of cedar**. The meaning could be: (1) that they would make an effort to protect her virginity. Alternate translation: [We will protect her virginity like we would enclose a door with boards of cedar] (2) that her chest was flat because her breasts were not fully formed, and so they would try to make her more attractive for the man she was going to marry by adorning her the way they would decorate a door with cedar wood. (The word the ULT translates as **enclose** is identical in form to another word which means "decorate" so "decorate" could be the intended meaning here.) Alternate translation: [And if she is flat like a door, we will decorate her like we would decorate a door with planks of cedar wood] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

Song of Solomon 8:10

I {was} a wall and my breasts {are} like towers; then I was, in his eyes, like a person who finds peace

The author does not say who is speaking here so you should not indicate who you think is speaking in the text of your translation. However, if you are using section headers to indicate who is speaking, you can place a header above 8:10 indicating that the speaker is the woman. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.274)**)

I {was} a wall

Here the woman continues the metaphor that her brothers began in the preceding verse by referring to herself as **a wall**. She could: (1) be indicating that she had remained a virgin. Alternate translation: [I was like a wall and remained a virgin] (2) be referring to her chest by saying that in the past her breasts were not fully formed. Alternate translation: [My chest was previously flat like a wall] (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p. 161)**)

and my breasts {are

Alternate translation: [but now my breasts are]

and my breasts {are} like towers

The woman is saying that her breasts are large **like towers**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [and now my breasts are large] or [and now my breasts are fully grown] (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

then

The word translated as **then** indicates that what follows is a result of what came before. Use a connector in your language that makes it clear that what follows is a result of what came before. Alternate translation: [this is why] or [as a result] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.175)**)

I was, in his eyes

Here, **his eyes** represent his evaluation or estimation. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [I am, in his judgment] or [he thinks of me] or [I was, in his opinion] (See: **Metonymy (p.226)**)

like a person who finds

The word the ULT translates as **finds** could mean: (1) “finds.” If you choose this option, translate this word in a similar way to the ULT. (2) “brings.” Alternate translation: [like a person who brings]

I was, in his eyes, like a person who finds peace

Here the word **peace** refers to “favor.” If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [I found favor in his eyes] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

Song of Solomon 8:11

in Baal Hamon

Baal Hamon is the name of a place. The name **Baal Hamon** means “master of wealth, wealthy master, possessor of abundance.” Because the meaning of the name has significance here, you could include a footnote indicating that. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.204)**)

to keepers

Here, **keepers** are farmers who rent land from an owner and farm it. The **keepers** paid Solomon **a thousand pieces of silver** to farm his land. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of farmer, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [to people who would pay him to let them farm it] or [to men who would pay him so that they could farm it] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.267)**)

He gave the vineyard to keepers

Alternate translation: [He rented the vineyard to keepers] or [He leased the vineyard to keepers] or [He agreed to let keepers pay him so they could grow grapes in the vineyard]

Each person brought in exchange for its fruit a thousand {pieces of} silver

Here the phrase **its fruit** refers to the fruit of **the vineyard**, and the phrase **Each person** refers to each of the **keepers**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [Each keeper brought in exchange for the fruit of the vineyard a thousand pieces of silver] or [Each keeper brought Solomon a thousand pieces of silver as payment for the fruit of the vineyard] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

a thousand {pieces of} silver

Alternate translation: [a thousand silver coins] (See: **Biblical Money (p.164)**)

כֶּ רֶם הָיָ ה לִשְׁלֹמֹ֨ה בְּבַ עַל הָמ ֹון נָתַ ן אֶת־הַכְּ רָם לַנֹּטְרִ ים אִ יש יָבִ א בְּפִרְי ֹו אֶ לֶף כָּסֶף׃
כַּרְמִ י שֶׁלִּ י לְפָנָ י הָאֶ לֶף לְךָ שְׁלֹמֹ ה וּמָאתַ יִם לְנֹטְרִ ים אֶת־פִּרְיֹו׃

Because the author does not say who is speaking, you should not indicate who is speaking in the text. If you are using section headers to indicate who is speaking, the speaker could be: (1) the woman in both 8:11 and 8:12. If you decide that the woman is speaking, you can include both verses under the section heading for 8:10 indicating that. (2) the man in both these verses. If you decide the man is speaking, you can put a section header at the top of 8:11 indicating that. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.274)**)

Song of Solomon 8:12

My vineyard

Here the phrase **My vineyard** is a metaphor (see the section on 8:12 in the chapter intro for the meaning of this entire verse). It could be: (1) the woman referring to herself as a vineyard, as she did in 1:6. Alternate translation: [I am like a vineyard] or [My body is like a vineyard] (2) the man referring to the woman he loves as if she were his vineyard. Alternate translation: [The woman whom I love is like my vineyard] or [The woman whom I love is like a vineyard] (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

is} to my face

The phrase **is to my face** means "is mine to give." If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [is at my disposal] or [is mine to do with as I desire] or [is mine to give to whom I choose] (See: **Idiom (p.212)**)

The thousand {belong} to you, Solomon, and the two hundred {belong} to the people who {are} keepers of its fruit

Here the word **thousand** refers to the "thousand pieces of silver" in the previous verse. The phrase **the two hundred** refers to the two hundred pieces of silver that Solomon would have paid to **the people who are keepers** of the vineyard's fruit. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [The thousand pieces of silver belong to you, Solomon, and the two hundred pieces of silver belong to the people whom you pay to be keepers of the vineyard's fruit] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

The thousand {belong} to you, Solomon

Here the woman could be: (1) speaking as if **Solomon** is present with her even though he is not, in order to use him as an example. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate these words as if the woman is speaking about Solomon and not to him. Alternate translation: [The thousand belong to Solomon] (2) calling the man she loves **Solomon** (even though he is not Solomon) as a term of endearment, similar to how she called the man she loved "The king" in 1:4. Alternate translation: [The thousand belong to you, the man I love, you who are like king Solomon] or [The thousand belong to you, the man I love, you whom I call Solomon] (See: **Apostrophe (p.153)**)

Song of Solomon 8:13

You} who reside in the gardens; companions are listening intently for your voice— let me hear it

The author does not say who is speaking in this verse so you should not indicate who you think is speaking in the text. However, if you are using section headers to indicate who is speaking, you could place a header above this section indicating that the man is speaking. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.274)**)

companions are

Here the term **companions** is masculine in form in the original language and most likely refers to the man's friends who were shepherds and were mentioned in 1:7. See how you translated the term **companions** in 1:7. (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.272)**)

for your voice

Here the word **voice** could: (1) represent the woman's words. Alternate translation: [to hear you speak] (2) refer to the sound of the woman's voice. Alternate translation: [to hear your voice] (See: **Metonymy (p.226)**)

Song of Solomon 8:14

Flee, my beloved, and resemble a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of spices

The author does not say who is speaking in this verse so you should not indicate who you think is speaking in the text. However, if you are using section headers to indicate who is speaking, you could place a header above this section indicating that the woman is speaking. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.274)**)

Flee

Here the word **Flee** means "come quickly." If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [Come quickly] or [Hurry] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.155)**)

my beloved, and resemble a gazelle or a young stag

See how you translated the similar expression, "My beloved is resembling a gazelle or a young stag" in 2:9. (See: **Simile (p.258)**)

on the mountains of spices

Here the woman is speaking of herself as if she is the **mountains of spices** and she wants the man she loves to come to her and enjoy her body. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. (See: **Metaphor (p.220)**)

unfoldingWord® Translation Academy

Version 85

Abstract Nouns

Description

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)

Abstract nouns are nouns that refer to attitudes, qualities, events, or situations. These are things that cannot be seen or touched in a physical sense, such as happiness, weight, unity, friendship, health, and reason. This is a translation issue because some languages may express a certain idea with an abstract noun, while others would need a different way to express it.

Remember that nouns are words that refer to a person, place, thing, or idea. Abstract nouns are the nouns that refer to ideas. These can be attitudes, qualities, events, situations, or even relationships between those ideas. These are things that cannot be seen or touched in a physical sense, such as joy, peace, creation, goodness, contentment, justice, truth, freedom, vengeance, slowness, length, weight, and many, many more.

Some languages, such as Biblical Greek and English, use abstract nouns a lot. They provide a way of giving names to actions or qualities. With names, people who speak these languages can talk about the concepts as though they were things. For example, in languages that use abstract nouns, people can say, “I believe in the forgiveness of sin.” But some languages do not use abstract nouns very much. In these languages, speakers may not have the two abstract nouns “forgiveness” and “sin,” but they would express the same meaning in other ways. For example, they would express, “I believe that God is willing to forgive people after they have sinned,” by using verb phrases instead of nouns for those ideas.

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: Song of Solomon 1:2; Song of Solomon 1:4; Song of Solomon 2:4; Song of Solomon 2:5; Song of Solomon 2:7; Song of Solomon 3:10; Song of Solomon 3:11; Song of Solomon 4:10; Song of Solomon 7:6; Song of Solomon 7:12; Song of Solomon 8:6; Song of Solomon 8:7

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: Song of Solomon 2:12; Song of Solomon 3:10; Song of Solomon 4:2; Song of Solomon 4:4; Song of Solomon 7:5; Song of Solomon 8:8

Apostrophe

Description

This page answers the question: *What is the figure of speech called an apostrophe?*

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

Figures of Speech (UTA PDF)

An apostrophe is a figure of speech in which a speaker turns his attention away from his listeners and speaks to someone or something that he knows cannot hear him. He does this to tell his listeners his message or feelings about that person or thing in a very strong way.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Many languages do not use apostrophe, and readers could be confused by it. They may wonder who the speaker is talking to, or think that the speaker is crazy to talk to things or people who cannot hear.

Examples from the Bible

> Mountains of Gilboa, let there not be dew or rain on you. (2 Samuel 1:21a ULT)

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

> Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those sent to you. (Luke 13:34a ULT)

Jesus was expressing his feelings for the people of Jerusalem in front of his disciples and a group of Pharisees. By speaking directly to Jerusalem as though its people could hear him, Jesus showed how deeply he cared about them.

> He cried against the altar by the word of Yahweh: "**Altar**, **altar**! This is what Yahweh says, 'See, ... on you they will burn human bones.'" (1 Kings 13:2 ULT)

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

Translation Strategies

If apostrophe would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. But if this way of speaking would be confusing to your people, let the speaker continue speaking to the people that are listening to him as he tells **them** his message or feelings about the people or thing that cannot hear him. See the example below.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

> He cried against the altar by the word of Yahweh: "**Altar**, **altar**! This is what Yahweh says, 'See, ... on you they will burn human bones.'" (1 Kings 13:2 ULT)
>
> > He said this about the altar: "This is what Yahweh says **about this altar.** 'See, ... they will burn people's bones on **it**.'"
>
> **Mountains of Gilboa**, let there not be dew or rain on **you.** (2 Samuel 1:21a ULT)
>
> > **As for these mountains of Gilboa**, let there not be dew or rain on **them**.

"

Referenced in: Song of Solomon 2:7; Song of Solomon 4:16; Song of Solomon 8:12

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: Song of Solomon 1:3; Song of Solomon 1:4; Song of Solomon 1:5; Song of Solomon 1:6; Song of Solomon 1:7; Song of Solomon 1:16; Song of Solomon 2:1; Song of Solomon 2:2; Song of Solomon 2:3; Song of Solomon 2:4; Song of Solomon 2:7; Song of Solomon 2:9; Song of Solomon 3:2; Song of Solomon 3:6; Song of Solomon 3:8; Song of Solomon 3:9; Song of Solomon 3:10; Song of Solomon 4:10; Song of Solomon 4:11; Song of Solomon 4:15; Song of Solomon 5:1; Song of Solomon 5:5; Song of Solomon 5:6; Song of Solomon 5:7; Song of Solomon 5:10; Song of Solomon 5:13; Song of Solomon 5:15; Song of Solomon 6:2; Song of Solomon 6:6; Song of Solomon 6:9; Song of Solomon 6:12; Song of Solomon 6:13; Song of Solomon 7:1; Song of Solomon 7:5; Song of Solomon 7:6; Song of Solomon 7:8; Song of Solomon 7:9; Song of Solomon 8:1; Song of Solomon 8:2; Song of Solomon 8:3; Song of Solomon 8:5; Song of Solomon 8:6; Song of Solomon 8:7; Song of Solomon 8:8; Song of Solomon 8:10; Song of Solomon 8:11; Song of Solomon 8:12; Song of Solomon 8:14

Background Information

Description

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)

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.

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: Song of Solomon 3:9

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, briers 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 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 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: Song of Songs 4 General Notes; Song of Solomon 4:12; Song of Solomon 4:13; Song of Solomon 4:15; Song of Solomon 4:16; Song of Solomon 5:1; Song of Solomon 7:2; Song of Solomon 8:10

Biblical Money

Description

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the values of money in the Bible?*

In early Old Testament times, people weighed their metals, such as silver and gold, and would pay a certain weight of that metal in order to buy things. Later, people started to make coins that each contained a standard amount of a certain metal. The daric is one such coin. In New Testament times, people used silver and copper coins.

The two tables below show some of the most well-known units of money found in the Old Testament (OT) and New Testament (NT). The table for Old Testament units shows what kind of metal was used and how much it weighed. The table for New Testament units shows what kind of metal was used and how much it was worth in terms of a day's wage.

Unit in OT	Metal	Weight
daric	gold coin	8.4 grams
shekel	various metals	11 grams
talent	various metals	33 kilograms

Unit in NT	Metal	Day's Wage
denarius/denarii	silver coin	1 day
drachma	silver coin	1 day
mite	copper coin	1/64 day
shekel	silver coin	4 days
talent	silver	6,000 days

Translation Principle

Do not use modern money values since these change from year to year. Using them will cause the Bible translation to become outdated and inaccurate.

Translation Strategies

The value of most money in the Old Testament was based on its weight. So when translating these weights in the Old Testament, see Biblical Weight. The strategies below are for translating the value of money in the New Testament.

(1) Use the Bible term and spell it in a way that is similar to the way it sounds. (See Copy or Borrow Words.)
(2) Describe the value of the money in terms of what kind of metal it was made of and how many coins were used.
(3) Describe the value of the money in terms of what people in Bible times could earn in one day of work.
(4) Use the biblical term and give the equivalent amount in the text or a footnote.
(5) Use the biblical term and explain it in a footnote.

Translation Strategies Applied

The translations strategies are all applied to Luke 7:41 below.

> The one owed 500 denarii, and the other, 50. (Luke 7:41b ULT)

Use the Bible term and spell it in a way that is similar to the way it sounds. (See Copy or Borrow Words.)

> > “The one owed **500 denali**, and the other, **50**.”

Describe the value of the money in terms of what kind of metal it was made of and how many pieces or coins were used.

> > “The one owed **500 silver coins**, and the other, **50**.”

(3) Describe the value of the money in terms of what people in Bible times could earn in one day of work.

> > “The one owed **500 days’ wages**, and the other, **50**.”

(4) Use the Bible term and give the equivalent amount in the text or a footnote.

> > “The one owed **500 denarii** 1, and the other owed **50 denarii**. 2”

The footnotes would look like:

> > [1] 500 days’ wages [2] 50 days’ wages

(5) Use the Bible term and explain it in a footnote.

> > “The one owed **500 denarii**,1 and the other, **50**.” (Luke 7:41 ULT)
>
> > [1] A denarius was the amount of silver that people could earn in one day of work.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Copy or Borrow Words (UTA PDF)
Translate Unknowns (UTA PDF)

"

Referenced in: Song of Solomon 8:11

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: Song of Solomon 2:13

Connect — Contrast Relationship

Logical Relationships

This page answers the question: *How can I translate a contrast relationship?*

Some connectors establish logical relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

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: Song of Solomon 1:5

Connect — Factual Conditions

Conditional Relationships

This page answers the question: *How can I translate factual 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.

Factual Conditions

Description

A Factual Condition is a condition that sounds hypothetical but is already certain or true in the speaker's mind. In English, a sentence containing a Factual Condition can use the words "even though," "since," or "this being the case" to indicate that it is a factual condition and not a hypothetical condition.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not state something as a condition if it is certain or true. Translators from these languages may misunderstand the original languages and think that the condition is uncertain. This would lead to mistakes in their translations. Even if the translators understand that the condition is certain or true, the readers may misunderstand it. In this case, it would be best to translate it as a statement of fact rather than as a conditional statement.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

> "**If** Yahweh 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)

This sentence has the same construction as a hypothetical condition. The condition is "if Yahweh is God." If that is true, then the Israelites should worship Yahweh. But the prophet Elijah does not question whether or not Yahweh is God. In fact, he is so certain that Yahweh is God that later in the passage he pours water all over his sacrifice. He is confident that God is real and that he will burn even an offering that is completely wet. Over and over again, the prophets taught that Yahweh is God, so the people should worship him. The people did not worship Yahweh, however, even though He is God. By putting the statement or instruction into the form of a Factual Condition, Elijah is trying to get the Israelites to understand more clearly what they should do.

> "A son honors his father, and a servant honors his master. **If** I, then, am a father, where is my honor? **If** I am a master, where is the reverence for me?" says Yahweh of hosts to you priests, who despise my name. (Malachi 1:6 ULT)

Yahweh has said that he is a father and a master to Israel, so even though this sounds like a hypothetical condition because it begins with "if," it is not hypothetical. This verse begins with the proverb that a son honors his father. Everyone knows that is right. But the Israelites are not honoring Yahweh. The other proverb in the verse says that a servant honors his master. Everyone knows that is right. But the Israelites are not honoring Yahweh, so it seems that he is not their master. But Yahweh is the master. Yahweh uses the form of a hypothetical condition to demonstrate that the Israelites are wrong. The second part of the condition that should occur naturally is not happening, even though the conditional statement is true.

Translation Strategies

If using the form of a hypothetical condition is confusing or would make the reader think that the speaker doubts what he is saying in the first part of the sentence, then use a statement instead. Words such as “since” or “you know that …” or “it is true that …” can be helpful to make the meaning clear.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

> “**If** Yahweh is God, worship him!” (Story 19 Frame 6 OBS)
>
> > “**It is true that** Yahweh is God, so worship him!”
>
> “A son honors his father, and a servant honors his master. **If** I, then, am a father, where is my honor? **If** I am a master, where is the reverence for me?” says Yahweh of hosts to you priests, who despise my name. (Malachi 1:6 ULT)
>
> > “A son honors his father, and a servant honors his master. **Since** I, then, am a father, where is my honor? **Since** I am a master, where is the reverence for me?”

"

Referenced in: Song of Solomon 8:7

Connect — Hypothetical Conditions

Conditional Relationships

This page answers the question: *How can I translate hypothetical 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.

Hypothetical Condition

Description

A Hypothetical Condition is a condition in which the second event (the “then” clause) will only take place if the first event (the “if” clause) takes place or is fulfilled in some way. Sometimes what takes place is dependent on the actions of other people.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

It is important that translators understand whether or not something is a Hypothetical Condition so that they translate it in the correct way. For example, some of God’s promises to Israel were conditional, based on whether or not Israel obeyed God. However, many of God’s promises to Israel were not conditional; God would keep these promises whether or not the Israelites obeyed. It is important that you (the translator) know the difference between these two types of promises and communicate each one accurately in your own language. Also, sometimes conditions are stated in an order different than the order in which they would happen. If the target language would state the clauses in a different order, then you will need to make that adjustment.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

> God promised to bless the people and protect them, **if** they obeyed these laws. But he said he would punish them **if** they did not obey them (Story 13 Frame 7 OBS)

There are two hypothetical conditions in this frame. In both of these conditions, the first event (the “if clause”) is stated after the “then” clause. If this is unnatural or confusing, the clauses can be restated in the more natural order. The first hypothetical condition is: if the Israelites obeyed God, then God would bless and protect them. The second hypothetical condition is: if the Israelites did not obey God, then God would punish them.

> If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? (Genesis 4:7a ULT)

If Cain does what is right, then he will be accepted. The only way for Cain to be accepted is by doing what is right.

> … **if** this plan or this work is of men, it will be overthrown. But **if** it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. (Acts 5:38b-39aULT)

There are two hypothetical conditions here: (1) If it is true that this plan is of men, then it will be overthrown; (2) If it is true that this plan is of God, then it cannot be overthrown.

Translation Strategies

(1) If the order of clauses makes the hypothetical condition confusing, then change the order of the clauses.

(2) If it is not clear where the second event is, mark that part with a word like “then.”

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the order of clauses makes the hypothetical condition confusing, then change the order of the clauses.

> God promised to bless the people and protect them **if** they obeyed these laws. But he said he would punish them **if** they did not obey them. (Story 13 Frame 7 OBS)
>
> > If the people obeyed these laws, God promised he would bless them and protect them. But **if** they did not obey these laws, God said that he would punish them.

(2) If it is not clear where the second event is, mark that part with a word like “then.”

> God promised to bless the people and protect them, **if** they obeyed these laws. But he said he would punish them **if** they did not obey them. (Story 13 Frame 7 OBS)
>
> > If the people obeyed these laws, **then** God promised he would bless them and protect them. But **if** they did not obey these laws, **then** God said that he would punish them.
>
> … **if** this plan or this work is of men, it will be overthrown. But **if** it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them; (Acts 5:38b-39a ULT)
>
> > … **if** this plan or this work is of men, **then** it will be overthrown. But **if** it is of God, **then** you will not be able to overthrow them;

"

Referenced in: Song of Solomon 1:8; Song of Solomon 8:1

Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

Logical Relationships

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the reason-result relationship?*

Some connectors establish logical relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

Reason-and-Result Relationships

Description

A reason-and-result relationship is a logical relationship in which one event is the **reason** or cause for another event. The second event, then, is the **result** of the first event.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

A reason-and-result relationship can look forward — "I did Y because I wanted X to happen." But usually it is looking backward — "X happened, and so I did Y." Also, it is possible to state the reason either before or after the result. Many languages have a preferred order for the reason and the result, and it will be confusing for the reader if they are in the opposite order. Common words used to indicate a reason-and-result relationship in English are "because," "so," "therefore," and "for." Some of these words can also be used to indicate a goal relationship, so translators need to be aware of the difference between a goal relationship and a reason-and-result relationship. It is necessary for translators to understand how the two events are connected, and then communicate them clearly in their language.

If the reason and result are stated in different verses, it is still possible to put them in a different order. If you change the order of the verses, then put the verse numbers together at the beginning of the group of verses that were rearranged like this: 1-2. This is called a Verse Bridge.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

> The Jews were amazed, **because** Saul had tried to kill believers, and now he believed in Jesus! (Story 46 Frame 6 OBS)

The **reason** is the change in Saul — that he had tried to kill people who believed in Jesus, and now he himself believed in Jesus. The **result** is that the Jews were amazed. "Because" connects the two ideas and indicates that what follows it is a reason.

> Behold, a great storm arose on the sea, **so that** the boat was covered with the waves. (Matthew 8:24a ULT)

The **reason** is the great storm, and the **result** is that the boat was covered with the waves. The two events are connected by "so that." Notice that the term "so that" often indicates a goal relationship, but here the relationship is reason-and-result. This is because the sea cannot think and therefore does not have a goal.

> God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, **because** in it he rested from all his work which he had done in his creation. (Genesis 2:3 ULT)

The **result** is that God blessed and sanctified the seventh day. The **reason** is because he rested on the seventh day from his work.

> "Blessed are the poor, **for** yours is the kingdom of God." (Luke 6:20b ULT)

The **result** is that the poor are blessed. The **reason** is that the kingdom of God is theirs.

> But he raised up in their place their sons that Joshua circumcised, being uncircumcised, **because** they had not been circumcised on the way. (Joshua 5:7 ULT)

The **result** is that Joshua circumcised the boys and men who had been born in the wilderness. The **reason** was that they had not been circumcised while they were journeying.

Translation Strategies

If your language uses reason-and-result relationships in the same way as in the text, then use them as they are.

(1) If the order of the clauses is confusing for the reader, then change the order.

(2) If the relationship between the clauses is not clear, then use a more clear connecting word.

(3) If it is more clear to put a connecting word in the clause that does not have one, then do so.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

> God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, **because** in it he rested from all his work which he had done in his creation. (Genesis 2:3 ULT)

(1) God rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done in his creation. **That is why** he blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.

> Blessed are the poor, **for** yours is the kingdom of God. (Luke 6:20 ULT)

(1) The kingdom of God belongs to you who are poor. **Therefore**, the poor are blessed.

(2) Blessed are the poor, **because** yours is the kingdom of God.

(3) **The reason that** the poor are blessed **is because** yours is the kingdom of God.

> Behold, a great storm arose on the sea, **so that** the boat was covered with the waves. (Matthew 8:24a ULT)

(1) Behold, the boat was covered with the waves **because** a great storm arose on the sea.

(2) Behold, a great storm arose on the sea, **with the result that** the boat was covered with the waves.

(3) Behold, **because** a great storm arose on the sea, the boat was covered with the waves.

> **Since** he was not able to find out anything for certain because of the noise, he ordered that he be brought into the fortress. (Acts 21:34b ULT)

(1) The captain ordered that Paul be brought into the fortress, **because** he could not tell anything because of all the noise.

(2) **Because** the captain could not tell anything because of all the noise, he ordered that Paul be brought into the fortress.

(3) The captain could not tell anything because of all the noise, **so** he ordered that Paul be brought into the fortress.

"

Referenced in: Song of Solomon 1:3; Song of Solomon 1:6; Song of Solomon 2:5; Song of Solomon 2:11; Song of Solomon 8:1; Song of Solomon 8:10

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: Song of Solomon 3:6

Copy or Borrow Words

Description

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)

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.)

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 — צְפַנְיָ ה
>
> > "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: Song of Solomon 2:17

Direct and Indirect Quotations

Description

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)

There are two kinds of quotations: direct quotations and indirect quotations.

A direct quotation occurs when someone reports what another person said from the viewpoint of that original speaker. People usually expect that this kind of quotation will represent the original speaker's exact words. In the example below, John would have said "I" when referring to himself, so the narrator, who is reporting John's words, uses the word "I" in the quotation to refer to John. To show that these are John's exact words, many languages put the words between quotation marks: "".

- John said, "**I** do not know at what time **I** will arrive."

An indirect quotation occurs when a speaker reports what someone else said, but in this case, the speaker is reporting it from his own point of view instead and not from the original person's point of view. This kind of quotation usually contains changes in pronouns, and it often includes changes in time, in word choices, and in length. In the example below, the narrator refers to John as "he" in the quotation and uses the word "would" to replace the future tense, indicated by "will."

- John said that **he** did not know at what time **he** would arrive.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In some languages, reported speech can be expressed by either direct or indirect quotations. In other languages, it is more natural to use one than the other. There may be a certain meaning implied by using one rather than the other. So for each quotation, translators need to decide whether it is best to translate it as a direct quotation or as an indirect quotation.

Examples From the Bible

The verses in the examples below contain both direct and indirect quotations. In the explanation below the verse, we have marked in bold the words that are quoted.

> And he commanded him to tell no one, but, "Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them." (Luke 5:14 ULT)

- Indirect quote: He commanded him **to tell no one**,
- Direct quote: but told him, "**Go, show yourself to the priest ...**"

> And being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, he answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with careful observation. Neither will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is among you." (Luke 17:20-21 ULT)

- Indirect quote: Being asked by the Pharisees **when the kingdom of God was coming,**
- Direct quote: he answered them and said, "**The kingdom of God is not coming with careful observation. Neither will they say, 'Look. here it is!' or 'There it is!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is among you.**"
- Direct quotes: Neither will they say, '**Look, here it is!**' or, '**There it is!**'

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: Song of Solomon 2:14

Doublet

Description

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)

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.

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: Song of Solomon 1:4; Song of Solomon 2:7; Song of Solomon 2:11

Ellipsis

Description

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)

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:

> > > > 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 **sinners in the assembly** of the righteous. (Psalm 1:5 ULT)
>
> > > > So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, and **sinners 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: Song of Solomon 1:7; Song of Solomon 1:16; Song of Solomon 2:1; Song of Solomon 2:17; Song of Solomon 3:3; Song of Solomon 3:6; Song of Solomon 3:8; Song of Solomon 3:10; Song of Solomon 4:10; Song of Solomon 5:2; Song of Solomon 5:5; Song of Solomon 5:8; Song of Solomon 5:13; Song of Solomon 6:1; Song of Solomon 6:4; Song of Solomon 6:13; Song of Solomon 7:8; Song of Solomon 8:6

Euphemism

Description

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)

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.

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: Introduction to the Song of Songs; Song of Solomon 1:13; Song of Solomon 2:4; Song of Solomon 8:2

Exclamations

Description

This page answers the question: *What are ways of translating exclamations?*

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

Sentence Types (UTA PDF)

Exclamations are words or sentences that show strong feeling such as surprise, joy, fear, or anger. In the ULT and UST, they usually have an exclamation mark (!) at the end. The mark shows that it is an exclamation. The situation and the meaning of what the people said helps us understand what feelings they were expressing. In the example below from Matthew 8, the speakers were terribly afraid. In the example from Matthew 9, the speakers were amazed, because something happened that they had never seen before.

> Save us, Lord; we are about to die! (Matthew 8:25b ULT)
>
> When the demon had been driven out, the mute man spoke. The crowds were astonished and said, “This has never been seen before in Israel!” (Matthew 9:33 ULT)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Languages have different ways of showing that a sentence communicates strong emotion.

Examples From the Bible

Some exclamations have a word that shows feeling. The sentences below have “Oh” and “Ah.” The word “oh” here shows the speaker’s amazement.

> **Oh**, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! (Romans 11:33 ULT)

The word “Alas” below shows that Gideon was very frightened.

> When Gideon saw that he was the angel of Yahweh, Gideon lamented, “**Alas**, O my Lord Yahweh, for because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!” (Judges 6:22 ULT)
>
> Some exclamations start with a question word such as “how” or “why,” even though they are not questions. The sentence below shows that the speaker is amazed at how unsearchable God’s judgments are.
>
> **How** unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways beyond discovering! (Romans 11:33b ULT)

Some exclamations in the Bible do not have a main verb. The exclamation below shows that the speaker is disgusted with the person he is speaking to.

> You worthless person! (Matthew 5:22b ULT)

Translation Strategies

(1) If an exclamation in your language needs a verb, add one. Often a good verb is “is” or “are.”
(2) Use an exclamation word from your language that shows the strong feeling.
(3) Translate the exclamation word with a sentence that shows the feeling.
(4) Use a word that emphasizes the part of the sentence that brings about the strong feeling.
(5) If the strong feeling is not clear in the target language, then tell how the person felt.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If an exclamation in your language needs a verb, add one. Often a good verb is “is” or “are.”

> You worthless person! (Matthew 5:22b ULT)
>
> > “You **are** such a worthless person!”
>
> Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! (Romans 11:33b ULT)
>
> > “Oh, the riches of the wisdom and the knowledge of God **are** so deep!”

(2) Use an exclamation word from your language that shows the strong feeling. In the first suggested translation below, the word “wow” shows that they were astonished. In the second suggested translation, the expression “Oh no” shows that something terrible or frightening has happened.

> They were extremely astonished, saying, “He has done everything well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.” (Mark 7:37 ULT)
>
> > “They were extremely astonished, saying, ‘**Wow**! He has done everything well. He even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.’”
>
> Alas, oh my Lord Yahweh! For because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face! (Judges 6:22b ULT)
>
> > “**Oh no**, Lord Yahweh! I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!”

(3) Translate the exclamation word with a sentence that shows the feeling.

> “**Alas,** O my Lord Yahweh, for because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!” (Judges 6:22 ULT)
>
> > “Lord Yahweh, **what will happen to me**? For I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!” “**Help**, Lord Yahweh! For I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!”

(4) Use a word that emphasizes the part of the sentence that brings about the strong feeling.

> How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways beyond discovering! (Romans 11:33b ULT)
>
> > “His judgments are **so** unsearchable and his ways are **far** beyond discovering!”

(5) If the strong feeling is not clear in the target language, then tell how the person felt.

> When Gideon saw that he was the angel of Yahweh, Gideon lamented, “**Alas,** O my Lord Yahweh, for because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!” (Judges 6:22 ULT)
>
> > Gideon understood that this was the angel of Yahweh. **He was terrified** and said, “**Alas**, Lord Yahweh! I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!”

"

Referenced in: Song of Solomon 2:8; Song of Solomon 4:10; Song of Solomon 7:1; Song of Solomon 7:6

Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

Description

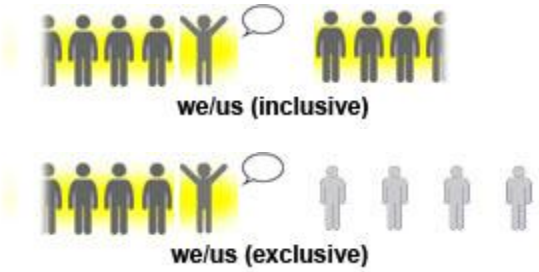
This page answers the question: *What are the exclusive and inclusive forms of "we"?*

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

Pronouns (UTA PDF)

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.

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: Song of Solomon 1:4; Song of Solomon 1:11; Song of Solomon 2:9; Song of Solomon 2:15

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."

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)

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.

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: Song of Solomon 2:16; Song of Solomon 6:3; Song of Solomon 6:13

Forms of 'You' — Singular

Description

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)

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.

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: Song of Solomon 1:2

Generic Noun Phrases

Description

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)

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

> Can **a man** walk on hot coals without scorching his feet? So is **the man who goes in to his neighbor's wife**; **the one who touches her** will not go unpunished. (Proverbs 6:28-29 ULT)

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

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: Song of Solomon 1:9

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: Song of Solomon 1:4; Song of Solomon 1:8; Song of Solomon 2:4; Song of Solomon 2:8; Song of Solomon 2:10; Song of Solomon 2:11; Song of Solomon 2:13; Song of Solomon 3:4; Song of Solomon 3:6; Song of Solomon 3:11; Song of Solomon 4:6; Song of Solomon 4:8; Song of Solomon 4:16; Song of Solomon 5:1; Song of Solomon 5:6; Song of Solomon 6:2; Song of Solomon 6:11; Song of Solomon 7:8; Song of Solomon 7:9; Song of Solomon 7:11; Song of Solomon 7:12; Song of Solomon 8:2; Song of Solomon 8:5

How to Translate Names

Description

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)

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.

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: Introduction to the Song of Songs; Song of Solomon 4:8; Song of Solomon 7:4; Song of Solomon 8:11

Hyperbole

Description

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)

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.

Hyperbole

In hyperbole, a figure of speech that uses exaggeration, a speaker deliberately describes something with an extreme or even unreal statement, usually to show his strong feeling or opinion about it. He expects people to understand that he is exaggerating.

> They will not leave **stone upon stone in you.** (Luke 19:44b ULT)

This is an exaggeration. It means that the enemies will completely destroy Jerusalem.

> Moses was educated in **all the wisdom of the Egyptians.** (Acts 7:22a ULT)

This hyperbole means that he had learned everything an Egyptian education could offer.

Generalization

This is a statement that is true most of the time or in most situations that it could apply to.

> The one who ignores instruction **will have poverty and shame,** but **honor will come** to him who learns from correction. (Proverbs 13:18)

These generalizations tell about what normally happens to people who ignore instruction and what normally happens to people who learn from correction. There may be some exceptions to these statements, but they are generally true.

> And when you pray, do not make useless repetitions as **the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words.** (Matthew 6:7)

This generalization tells about what Gentiles were known for doing. Many Gentiles did this. It does not matter if a few did not. The point was that the hearers should not join in this well-known practice.

Even though a hyperbole or a generalization may have a strong-sounding word like “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never,” it does not necessarily mean **exactly** “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never.” It simply means “most,” “most of the time,” “hardly any,” or “rarely.”

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Readers need to be able to understand whether or not a statement is literally true.
If readers realize that a statement is not literally true, they need to be able to understand whether it is a hyperbole, a generalization, or a lie. (Though the Bible is completely true, it tells about people who did not always tell the truth.)

Examples From the Bible

Examples of Hyperbole

> If your hand causes you to stumble, **cut it off**. It is better for you to enter into life maimed … (Mark 9:43a ULT)

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

> The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel with 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men to drive the chariots, and troops **as numerous as the sand on the seashore**. (1 Samuel 13:5a ULT)

The bolded phrase is an exaggeration for the purpose of expressing the emotion that the Philistine army was overwhelming in number. It means that there were **many, many** soldiers in the Philistine army.

> But as his anointing teaches you **everything** and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, remain in him. (1 John 2:27b ULT)

This is a hyperbole. It expresses the assurance that God's Spirit teaches us about **all things that we need to know**. God's Spirit does not teach us about everything that it is possible to know.

> When they found him, they also said to him, "**Everyone** is looking for you." (Mark 1:37 ULT)

The disciples probably did not mean that everyone in the city was looking for Jesus, but that **many people** were looking for him, or that all of Jesus' closest friends there were looking for him. This is an exaggeration for the purpose of expressing the emotion that they and many others were worried about him.

Examples of Generalization

> Can **any good thing** come out of Nazareth? (John 1:46b ULT)

This rhetorical question is meant to express the generalization that there is nothing good in Nazareth. The people there had a reputation for being uneducated and not strictly religious. Of course, there were exceptions.

> One of them, of their own prophets, has said, "**Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy bellies**." (Titus 1:12 ULT)

This is a generalization that means that Cretans had a reputation to be like this because, in general, this is how Cretans behaved. It is possible that there were exceptions.

> **A lazy hand causes a person to be poor, but the hand of the diligent person gains riches.** (Proverbs 10:4 ULT)

This is generally true, and it reflects the experience of most people. It is possible that there are exceptions in some circumstances.

Caution

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

> They saw Jesus **walking on the sea** and coming near the boat. (John 6:19b ULT)

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

- Do not assume that the word “all” is always a generalization that means “most.”

> Yahweh is righteous in **all** his ways and gracious in **all** he does. (Psalms 145:17 ULT)

Yahweh is always righteous. This is a completely true statement.

Translation Strategies

If the hyperbole or generalization would be natural and people would understand it and not think that it is a lie, consider using it. If not, here are other options.

(1) Express the meaning without the exaggeration.
(2) For a generalization, show that it is a generalization by using a phrase like “in general” or “in most cases.”
(3) For a hyperbole or a generalization, add a word like “many” or “almost” to show that the hyperbole or generalization is not meant to be exact.
(4) For a hyperbole or a generalization that has a word like “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never,” consider deleting that word.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Express the meaning without the exaggeration.

> The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel: 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men to drive the chariots, and troops **as numerous as the sand on the seashore**. (1 Samuel 13:5a ULT)
>
> > The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel: 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men to drive the chariots, and **a great number of troops**.

(2) For a generalization, show that it is a generalization by using a phrase like “in general” or “in most cases.”

> **The one who ignores instruction will have poverty and shame.** (Proverbs 13:18a ULT)
>
> > **In general,** the one who ignores instruction will have poverty and shame
>
> When you pray, do not make useless repetitions as the **Gentiles do,** for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. (Matthew 6:7 ULT)
>
> > And when you pray, do not make useless repetitions as the Gentiles **generally** do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words.

(3) For a hyperbole or a generalization, add a word like “many” or “almost” to show that the hyperbole or generalization is not meant to be exact.

> The **whole** country of Judea and **all** the people of Jerusalem went out to him. (Mark 1:5a ULT)
>
> > **Almost all** the country of Judea and **almost all** the people of Jerusalem went out to him. or:

> > > > **Many** of the country of Judea and **many** of the people of Jerusalem went out to him.

(4) For a hyperbole or a generalization that has a word like “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never,” consider deleting that word.

> The **whole** country of Judea and **all** the people of Jerusalem went out to him. (Mark 1:5a ULT)
>
> > > > The country of Judea and the people of Jerusalem went out to him.

"

Referenced in: Song of Solomon 2:5; Song of Solomon 5:8

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:

> 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)*

- 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.")

Description

An idiom is a phrase that has a special meaning to the people of the language or culture who use it. Its meaning is different than what a person would understand from the meanings of the individual words that form the phrase.

> he **set his face** to go to Jerusalem. (Luke 9:51b ULT)

The words "set his face" is an idiom that means "decided."

Sometimes people may be able to understand an idiom from another culture, but it might sound like a strange way to express the meaning.

> I am not worthy that you would **come under my roof**. (Luke 7:6b ULT)

The phrase "come under my roof" is an idiom that means "enter my house."

> Put these words **into your ears**. (Luke 9:44a ULT)

This idiom means "Listen carefully and remember what I say."

Purpose: An idiom is probably created in a culture somewhat by accident when someone describes something in an unusual way. But, when that unusual way communicates the message powerfully and people understand it clearly, other people start to use it. After a while, it becomes a normal way of talking in that language.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- People can easily misunderstand idioms in the original languages of the Bible if they do not know the cultures that produced the Bible.
- People can easily misunderstand idioms that are in the source language Bibles if they do not know the cultures that made those translations.
- It is useless to translate idioms literally (according to the meaning of each word) when the target language audience will not understand what they mean.

Examples From the Bible

> Then all Israel came to David at Hebron and said, "Look, we are your **flesh and bone**." (1 Chronicles 11:1 ULT)

This means, "We and you belong to the same race, the same family."

> The children of Israel went out **with a high hand**. (Exodus 14:8b ASV)

This means, “The Israelites went out defiantly.”

> the one who **lifts up my head** (Psalm 3:3b ULT)

This means, “the one who helps me.”

Translation Strategies

If the idiom would be clearly understood in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

(1) Translate the meaning plainly without using an idiom.
(2) Use a different idiom that people use in your own language that has the same meaning.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Translate the meaning plainly without using an idiom.

> Then all Israel came to David at Hebron and said, “Look, we are your **flesh and bone**.” (1 Chronicles 11:1 ULT)
>
> > Look, we all **belong to the same nation**.
>
> Then he **set his face** to go to Jerusalem. (Luke 9:51b ULT)
>
> > He started to travel to Jerusalem, **determined to reach it**.
>
> I am not worthy that you would come **under my roof**. (Luke 7:6b ULT)
>
> > I am not worthy that you should enter **my house**.

(2) Use an idiom that people use in your own language that has the same meaning.

> Put these words **into your ears.** (Luke 9:44a ULT)
>
> > **Be all ears** when I say these words to you.
>
> My **eyes grow dim** from grief. (Psalm 6:7a ULT)
>
> > I am crying my **eyes out**

"

Referenced in: Song of Solomon 4:9; Song of Solomon 5:2; Song of Solomon 5:6; Song of Solomon 6:8; Song of Solomon 7:13; Song of Solomon 8:1; Song of Solomon 8:6; Song of Solomon 8:8; Song of Solomon 8:12

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: Song of Solomon 2:14

Information Structure

Description

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)

Different languages arrange the parts of the sentence in different ways. In English, a sentence normally has the subject first, then the verb, then the object, then other modifiers, like this: Peter painted his house yesterday.

Many other languages normally put these things in a different order such as: Painted yesterday Peter his house.

Although all languages have a normal order for parts of a sentence, this order can change depending on what information the speaker or writer considers to be the most important.

Suppose that someone is answering the question, “What did Peter paint yesterday?” The person asking the question already knows all of the information in our sentence above except for the object, “his house.” Therefore, that becomes the most important part of the information, and a person answering in English might say “His house is what Peter painted (yesterday).”

This puts the most important information first, which is normal for English. Many Other Languages would normally put the most important information last. In the flow of a text, the most important information is usually what the writer considers to be new information for the reader. In some languages the new information comes first, and in others it comes last.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Different languages arrange the parts of a sentence in different ways. If you (the translator) copy the order of the parts of a sentence from the source, it may not make sense in your language.
- Different languages put important or new information in different places in the sentence. If you keep the important or new information in the same place that it had in the source language, it may be confusing or give the wrong message in your language.

Examples From the Bible

> They all ate until they were satisfied. (Mark 6:42 ULT)

The parts of this sentence were in a different order in the original Greek source language. They were like this: And they ate all and they were satisfied.

In English, this means that the people ate everything. But the next verse says that they took up twelve baskets full of leftover pieces of food. In order for this to not be so confusing, the translators of the ULT put the parts of the sentence in the right order for English.

> And the day began to end, and the twelve came to him and said, “Send the crowd away so that, going into the surrounding villages and countryside, they may find lodging and food, because we are here in an desolate place.” (Luke 9:12 ULT)

In this verse, what the disciples say to Jesus puts the important information first, that he should send the crowd away. In languages that put the important information last, people would understand that the reason that they gave, being in an isolated place, is the most important part of their message to Jesus. They might then think that the disciples are afraid of the spirits in that place, and that sending the people to buy food is a way to protect them from the spirits. That is the wrong message.

> 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: Song of Solomon 1:8; Song of Solomon 1:9; Song of Solomon 1:16; Song of Solomon 2:3; Song of Solomon 2:8; Song of Solomon 4:9; Song of Solomon 4:10; Song of Solomon 4:12; Song of Solomon 5:1; Song of

Solomon 5:7; Song of Solomon 5:9; Song of Solomon 6:4; Song of Solomon 6:8; Song of Solomon 6:11; Song of Solomon 7:1; Song of Solomon 7:11

Metaphor

Description

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)

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.

The Parts of a Metaphor

The example above shows us that a metaphor has three parts. In this metaphor, the speaker is talking about "the girl I love." This is the **Topic**. The speaker wants the hearer to think about what is similar between her and "a red rose." The red rose is the **Image** to which he compares the girl. Most probably, he wants the hearer to consider that they are both beautiful. This is the **Idea** that the girl and the rose both share, and so we may also call it the **Point of Comparison**.

Every metaphor has three parts:

- The **Topic**, the item being immediately discussed by the writer/speaker.
- The **Image**, the physical item (object, event, action, etc.) which the speaker uses to describe the topic.
- The **Idea**, the abstract concept or quality that the physical **Image** brings to the mind of the hearer when he thinks of how the **Image** and the **Topic** are similar. Often, the **Idea** of a metaphor is not explicitly stated in the Bible, but it is only implied from the context. The hearer or reader usually needs to think of the **Idea** himself.

Using these terms, we can say that a metaphor is a figure of speech that uses a physical **Image** to apply an abstract **Idea** to the speaker's **Topic**.

Usually, a writer or speaker uses a metaphor in order to express something about a **Topic**, with at least one **Point of Comparison** (**Idea**) between the **Topic** and the **Image**. Often in metaphors, the **Topic** and the **Image** are explicitly stated, but the **Idea** is only implied. The writer/speaker often uses a metaphor in order to invite the readers/listeners to think about the similarity between the **Topic** and the **Image** and to figure out for themselves the **Idea** that is being communicated.

Speakers often use metaphors in order to strengthen their message, to make their language more vivid, to express their feelings better, to say something that is hard to say in any other way, or to help people remember their message.

Sometimes speakers use metaphors that are very common in their language. However, sometimes speakers use metaphors that are uncommon, and even some metaphors that are unique. When a metaphor has become very common in a language, often it becomes a "passive" metaphor, in contrast to uncommon metaphors, which we describe as being "active." Passive metaphors and active metaphors each present a different kind of translation problem, which we will discuss below.

Passive Metaphors

A passive metaphor is a metaphor that has been used so much in the language that its speakers no longer regard it as one concept standing for another. Linguists often call these "dead metaphors." Passive metaphors are extremely common. Examples in English include the terms "table **leg**," "family **tree**," "book **leaf**" (meaning a page in

a book), or the word “crane” (meaning a large machine for lifting heavy loads). English speakers simply think of these words as having more than one meaning. Examples of passive metaphors in Biblical Hebrew include using the word “hand” to represent “power,” using the word “face” to represent “presence,” and speaking of emotions or moral qualities as if they were “clothing.”

Patterned Pairs of Concepts Acting as Metaphors

Many ways of metaphorical speaking depend on pairs of concepts, where one underlying concept frequently stands for a different underlying concept. For example, in English, the direction “up” (the Image) often represents the concepts of “more” or “better” (the Idea). Because of this pair of underlying concepts, we can make sentences such as “The price of gasoline is going **up**,” “A **highly** intelligent man,” and also the opposite kind of idea: “The temperature is going **down**,” and “I am feeling very **low**.”

Patterned pairs of concepts are constantly used for metaphorical purposes in the world’s languages because they serve as convenient ways to organize thought. In general, people like to speak of abstract qualities (such as power, presence, emotions, and moral qualities) as if they were body parts, or as if they were objects that could be seen or held, or as if they were events that could be watched as they happened.

When these metaphors are used in normal ways, it is rare that the speaker and audience regard them as figurative speech. Examples of metaphors in English that go unrecognized are:

- “Turn the heat **up**.” More is spoken of as up.
- “Let us **go ahead** with our debate.” Doing what was planned is spoken of as walking or advancing.
- “You **defend** your theory well.” Argument is spoken of as war.
- “A **flow** of words.” Words are spoken of as liquids.

English speakers do not view these as metaphorical expressions or figures of speech, so it would be wrong to translate them into other languages in a way that would lead people to pay special attention to them as figurative speech. For a description of important patterns of this kind of metaphor in biblical languages, please see Biblical Imagery — Common Patterns and the pages it will direct you to.

When translating something that is a passive metaphor into another language, do not treat it as a metaphor. Instead, just use the best expression for that thing or concept in the target language.

Active Metaphors

These are metaphors that people recognize as one concept standing for another concept, or one thing for another thing. Metaphors make people think about how the one thing is like the other thing, because in most ways the two things are very different. People also easily recognize these metaphors as giving strength and unusual qualities to the message. For this reason, people pay attention to these metaphors. For example,

> But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings.
> (Malachi 4:2a ULT)

Here, God speaks about his salvation as if it were the sun rising in order to shine its rays on the people whom he loves. He also speaks of the sun’s rays as if they were wings. Also, he speaks of these wings as if they were bringing medicine that would heal his people. Here is another example:

> And he said to them, “Go and tell that fox ...” (Luke 13:32a ULT)

Here, “that fox” refers to King Herod. The people listening to Jesus certainly understood that Jesus was intending for them to apply certain characteristics of a fox to Herod. They probably understood that Jesus intended to communicate that Herod was evil, either in a cunning way or as someone who was destructive, murderous, or who took things that did not belong to him, or all of these.

Active metaphors require the translator’s special care to make a correct translation. To do so, you need to understand the parts of a metaphor and how they work together to produce meaning.

> Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; he who comes to me will not be hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.” (John 6:35 ULT)

In this metaphor, Jesus called himself the bread of life. The **Topic** is “I” (meaning Jesus himself) and the **Image** is “bread.” Bread was the primary food that people ate in that place and time. The similarity between bread and Jesus is that people need both to live. Just as people need to eat food in order to have physical life, people need to trust in Jesus in order to have eternal life. The **Idea** of the metaphor is “life.” In this case, Jesus stated the central Idea of the metaphor, but often the Idea is only implied.

Purposes of Metaphor

- One purpose of metaphor is to teach people about something that they do not know (the **Topic**) by showing that it is like something that they already do know (the **Image**).
- Another purpose is to emphasize that something (the **Topic**) has a particular quality (the **Idea**) or to show that it has that quality in an extreme way.
- Another purpose is to lead people to feel the same way about the **Topic** as they would feel about the **Image**.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- People may not recognize that something is a metaphor. In other words, they may mistake a metaphor for a literal statement, and thus, misunderstand it.
- People may not be familiar with the thing that is used as an image, and so, not be able to understand the metaphor.
- If the topic is not stated, people may not know what the topic is.
- People may not know the points of comparison that the speaker wants them to understand. If they fail to think of these points of comparison, they will not understand the metaphor.
- People may think that they understand the metaphor, but they do not. This can happen when they apply points of comparison from their own culture, rather than from the biblical culture.

Translation Principles

- Make the meaning of a metaphor as clear to the target audience as it was to the original audience.
- Do not make the meaning of a metaphor more clear to the target audience than you think it was to the original audience.

Examples From the Bible

> Listen to this word, **you cows of Bashan**, (Amos 4:1q ULT)

In this metaphor Amos speaks to the upper-class women of Samaria (“you,” the Topic) as if they were cows (the Image). Amos does not say what similarity(s) he intends between these women and cows. He wants the reader to think of them, and he fully expects that readers from his culture will easily do so. From the context, we can see that he means that the women are like cows in that they are fat and interested only in feeding themselves. If we were to apply similarities from a different culture, such as that cows are sacred and should be worshiped, we would get the wrong meaning from this verse.

NOTE: Amos does not actually mean that the women are cows. He speaks to them as human beings.

> Yet, Yahweh, you are our father; **we are the clay**. **You are our potter**; and we all are the work of your hand. (Isaiah 64:8 ULT)

The example above has two related metaphors. The Topic(s) are “we” and “you,” and the Image(s) are “clay” and “potter.” The similarity between a potter and God is the fact that both make what they wish out of their material.

The potter makes what he wishes out of the clay, and God makes what he wishes out of his people. The Idea being expressed by the comparison between the potter's clay and "us" is that **neither the clay nor God's people have a right to complain about what they are becoming**.

> Jesus said to them, "Take heed and beware of **the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees**."
> The disciples reasoned among themselves and said, "It is because we did not take bread."
> (Matthew 16:6-7 ULT)

Jesus used a metaphor here, but his disciples did not realize it. When he said "yeast," they thought he was talking about bread, but "yeast" was the Image in his metaphor, and the Topic was the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Since the disciples (the original audience) did not understand what Jesus meant, it would not be good to state clearly here what Jesus meant.

Translation Strategies

If people would understand the metaphor in the same way that the original readers would have understood it, go ahead and use it. Be sure to test the translation to make sure that people do understand it in the right way.

If people do not or would not understand it, here are some other strategies.

(1) If the metaphor is a common expression in the source language or expresses a patterned pair of concepts in a biblical language (that is, it is a passive metaphor), then express the **Idea** in the simplest way preferred by your language.
(2) If the metaphor seems to be an active metaphor, you can translate it literally **if you think that the target language also uses this metaphor in the same way to mean the same thing as in the Bible**. If you do this, be sure to test it to make sure that the language community understands it correctly.
(3) If the target audience does not realize that it is a metaphor, then change the metaphor to a simile. Some languages do this by adding words such as "like" or "as." See Simile.
(4) If the target audience would not know the **Image**, see Translate Unknowns for ideas on how to translate that image.
(5) If the target audience would not use that **Image** for that meaning, use an image from your own culture instead. Be sure that it is an image that could have been possible in Bible times.
(6) If the target audience would not know what the **Topic** is, then state the topic clearly. (However, do not do this if the original audience did not know what the Topic was.)
(7) If the target audience would not know the intended similarity (the **Idea**) between the topic and the image, then state it clearly.
(8) If none of these strategies is satisfactory, then simply state the **Idea** plainly without using a metaphor.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the metaphor is a common expression in the source language or expresses a patterned pair of concepts in a biblical language (that is, a passive metaphor), then express the Idea in the simplest way preferred by your language.

> Then, see, one of the leaders of the synagogue, named Jairus, came, and when he saw him, **fell at his feet**. (Mark 5:22 ULT)
>
> > Then one of the leaders of the synagogue, named Jairus, came, and when he saw him, **immediately bowed down in front of him**.

(2) If the metaphor seems to be an active metaphor, you can translate it literally **if you think that the target language also uses this metaphor in the same way to mean the same thing as in the Bible**. If you do this, be sure to test it to make sure that the language community understands it correctly.

> But Jesus said to them, "He wrote this commandment to you because of your **hardness of heart.**" (Mark 10:5 ULT)

> > > It was because of your **hard hearts** that he wrote you this law.

We made no change to this one, but it must be tested to make sure that the target audience correctly understands this metaphor.

(3) If the target audience does not realize that it is a metaphor, then change the metaphor to a simile. Some languages do this by adding words such as “like” or “as.”

> Yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we **are the clay.** You **are our potter**; and we all are the work of your hand. (Isaiah 64:8 ULT)
>
> > > And yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are **like** clay. You are **like** a potter; and we all are the work of your hand.

(4) If the target audience would not know the **Image**, see Translate Unknowns for ideas on how to translate that image.

> Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you **to kick against a goad**. (Acts 26:14b ULT)
>
> > > Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to **kick against a pointed stick**.

(5) If the target audience would not use that **Image** for that meaning, use an image from your own culture instead. Be sure that it is an image that could have been possible in Bible times.

> Yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are the **clay**. You are our **potter**; and we all are the work of your hand. (Isaiah 64:8 ULT)
>
> > > “And yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are the **wood**. You are our **carver**; and we all are the work of your hand.” “And yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are the **string**. You are the **weaver**; and we all are the work of your hand.”

(6) If the target audience would not know what the **Topic** is, then state the topic clearly. (However, do not do this if the original audience did not know what the topic was.)

> Yahweh lives; may **my rock** be praised. May the God of my salvation be exalted. (Psalm 18:46 ULT)
>
> > > Yahweh lives; **He is my rock**. May he be praised. May the God of my salvation be exalted.

(7) If the target audience would not know the intended similarity between the Topic and the Image, then state it clearly.

> Yahweh lives; may **my rock** be praised. May the God of my salvation be exalted. (Psalm 18:46 ULT)
>
> > > Yahweh lives; may he be praised because he is the rock **under which I can hide from my enemies**. May the God of my salvation be exalted.
>
> Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you **to kick against a goad**. (Acts 26:14 ULT)
>
> > > Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? You **fight against me and hurt yourself like an ox that kicks against its owner’s pointed stick**.

(8) If none of these strategies are satisfactory, then simply state the idea plainly without using a metaphor.

> I will make you to become **fishers of men**. (Mark 1:17b ULT)
>
> > I will make you to become **people who gather men**. Now you gather fish.
> > I will make you **gather people**.

To learn more about specific metaphors, see Biblical Imagery — Common Patterns.

"

Referenced in: Introduction to the Song of Songs; Song of Songs 1 General Notes; Song of Solomon 1:3; Song of Solomon 1:4; Song of Solomon 1:6; Song of Solomon 1:12; Song of Solomon 1:13; Song of Solomon 1:14; Song of Solomon 1:15; Song of Solomon 1:16; Song of Solomon 1:17; Song of Solomon 2:1; Song of Solomon 2:3; Song of Solomon 2:4; Song of Solomon 2:9; Song of Solomon 2:11; Song of Solomon 2:14; Song of Solomon 2:15; Song of Solomon 2:16; Song of Solomon 3:7; Song of Solomon 4:1; Song of Solomon 4:6; Song of Solomon 4:8; Song of Solomon 4:9; Song of Solomon 4:10; Song of Solomon 4:11; Song of Solomon 4:12; Song of Songs 5 General Notes; Song of Solomon 5:1; Song of Solomon 5:2; Song of Solomon 5:4; Song of Solomon 5:10; Song of Solomon 5:11; Song of Solomon 5:13; Song of Solomon 5:14; Song of Solomon 5:15; Song of Solomon 6:2; Song of Solomon 6:3; Song of Solomon 6:8; Song of Solomon 6:9; Song of Solomon 7:4; Song of Solomon 7:5; Song of Solomon 7:8; Song of Solomon 7:13; Song of Solomon 8:6; Song of Solomon 8:7; Song of Solomon 8:9; Song of Solomon 8:12; Song of Solomon 8:14

Metonymy

Description

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)

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.

> ... and **the blood** of Jesus his Son cleanses us from every sin. (1 John 1:7b ULT)

The blood represents Christ's death.

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

The cup represents the wine that is in the cup.

Metonymy can be used

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

The Bible uses metonymy very often. Speakers of some languages are not familiar with metonymy and they may not recognize it when they read it in the Bible. If they do not recognize the metonymy, they will not understand the passage or, worse yet, they will get a wrong understanding of the passage. Whenever a metonym is used, people need to be able to understand what it represents.

Examples From the Bible

> The Lord God will give to him **the throne** of his father David. (Luke 1:32b ULT)

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

> Then immediately his **mouth** was opened (Luke 1:64a ULT)

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

> Who warned you to flee from **the wrath** that is coming? (Luke 3:7b ULT)

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

Translation Strategies

If people would easily understand the metonym, consider using it. Otherwise, here are some options.

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

> And he took the cup in the same way after the supper, saying, "**This cup** is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you." (Luke 22:20 ULT)
>
> > He took the cup in the same way after supper, saying, "**The wine in this cup** is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."

This verse also contains a second metonym: The cup, (representing the wine it contains) also represents the new covenant made with the blood Christ shed for us.

(2) Use the name of the thing the metonym represents.

> The Lord God will give him **the throne** of his father David. (Luke 1:32b ULT)
>
> > "The Lord God will give him **the kingly authority** of his father, David." or: "The Lord God will **make him king** like his ancestor, King David."
>
> Who warned you to flee from **the wrath** that is coming? (Luke 3:7b ULT)
>
> > "Who warned you to flee from God's coming **punishment**?"

To learn about some common metonymies, see Biblical Imagery — Common Metonymies.

"

Referenced in: Song of Solomon 1:3; Song of Solomon 1:9; Song of Solomon 2:8; Song of Solomon 3:11; Song of Solomon 5:2; Song of Solomon 5:4; Song of Solomon 5:16; Song of Solomon 7:8; Song of Solomon 7:9; Song of Solomon 8:6; Song of Solomon 8:10; Song of Solomon 8:13

Numbers

Description

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)

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.

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: Song of Solomon 4:4

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 Pharoah (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: Song of Solomon 2:7; Song of Solomon 5:8; Song of Solomon 5:9; Song of Solomon 8:4

Parallelism

Description

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 a poetic device in which two phrases or clauses that are similar in structure or idea are used together. The following are some of the different kinds of parallelism.

- The second clause or phrase means the same as the first. This is called synonymous parallelism.
- The second clarifies or strengthens the meaning of the first.
- The second completes what is said in the first.
- The second says something that contrasts with the first, but adds to the same idea.

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

This article will only discuss synonymous parallelism, the kind in which the two parallel phrases mean the same thing, because that is the kind that presents a problem for translation. Note that we use the term "synonymous parallelism" for long phrases or clauses that have the same meaning. We use the term "doublet" for words or very short phrases that mean basically the same thing and are used together.

In the poetry of the original languages, synonymous parallelism has several effects:

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages would not use synonymous parallelism. They would either think it odd that someone said the same thing twice, or, since it is in the Bible, they would think that the two phrases must have some difference in meaning. For them it would be confusing, rather than beautiful. They would not understand that the repetition of the idea in different words serves to emphasize the idea.

Examples From the Bible

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

Both parts of the sentence are metaphors saying that God's word teaches people how to live. That is the single idea. The words "lamp" and "light" are similar in meaning because they refer to light. The words "my feet" and "my path" are related because they refer to a person walking. Walking is a metaphor for living.

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

Both lines say that God made man the ruler of everything. "To rule over" is the same idea as putting things "under his feet," and "the works of your [God's] hands" is the same idea as "all things."

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

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: Song of Solomon 1:15; Song of Solomon 2:1; Song of Solomon 2:5; Song of Solomon 2:8; Song of Solomon 2:9; Song of Solomon 2:11; Song of Solomon 2:14; Song of Solomon 2:17; Song of Solomon 3:4; Song of Solomon 3:6; Song of Solomon 3:11; Song of Solomon 4:1; Song of Solomon 4:4; Song of Solomon 4:8; Song of Solomon 4:12; Song of Solomon 5:5; Song of Solomon 5:12; Song of Solomon 6:1; Song of Solomon 6:9; Song of Solomon 7:1

Personification

Description

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)

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.

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: Song of Solomon 2:7; Song of Solomon 4:6

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)

"

Referenced in: Song of Solomon 1:1; Song of Solomon 1:2; Song of Solomon 2:14; Song of Solomon 3:1; Song of Solomon 3:5; Song of Solomon 4:13; Song of Solomon 5:9; Song of Solomon 6:8; Song of Solomon 8:1

Possession

Description

This page answers the question: *What is possession and how can I translate phrases that show it?*

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

Parts of Speech (UTA PDF)

Sentence Structure (UTA PDF)

In English, the grammatical form that commonly indicates possession is also used to indicate a variety of relationships between people and objects or people and other people. In English, that grammatical relationship is shown by using the word "**of**," by using **an apostrophe and the letter "s"**, or by using a **possessive pronoun**. The following examples are different ways to indicate that my grandfather owns a house.

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

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

- Ownership — Someone owns something.
- The clothes of me - my clothes — The clothes that I own
- Social Relationship — Someone has some kind of social relationship with another.
- The mother of John — John's mother - the woman who gave birth to John, or the woman who cared for John
- A teacher of Israel - Israel's teacher — a person who teaches Israel
- Association — A particular thing is associated with a particular person, place, or thing.
- The sickness of David - David's sickness — the sickness that David is experiencing
- the fear of the Lord — the fear that is appropriate for a human being to have when relating to the Lord
- Contents — Something has something in it.
- a bag of clothes — a bag that has clothes in it, or a bag that is full of clothes
- Part and whole: One thing is part of another.
- my head — the head that is part of my body
- the roof of a house — the roof that is part of a house

In some languages there is a special form of possession, termed **inalienable possession.** This form of possession is used for things that cannot be removed from you, as opposed to things you could lose. In the examples above, *my head* and *my mother* are examples of inalienable possession (at least in some languages), while *my clothes* or *my teacher* would be alienably possessed. What may be considered alienable vs. inalienable may differ by language. In languages that mark the difference, the expression of inalienable possession and alienable possession will be different.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- You (the translator) need to understand the relationship between two ideas represented by the two nouns when one is in the grammatical relationship of possessing the other.
- Some languages do not use grammatical possession for all of the situations that your source text Bible might use it for.

Examples From the Bible

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

> The younger son ... wasted his wealth by living recklessly. (Luke 15:13b)

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

> Then **the disciples of John** came to him. (Matthew 9:14a ULT)

Association — In the example below, the gospel is the message associated with Paul because he preaches it.

> Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, from the seed of David, according to **my gospel**, (2 Timothy 2:8 ULT)

Material — In the example below, the material used for making the crowns was gold.

> On their heads were something like **crowns of gold.** (Revelation 9:7b)

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

> For whoever gives you **a cup of water** to drink … will not lose his reward. (Mark 9:41 ULT)

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

> But Uriah slept at **the door of the king's palace.** (2 Samuel 11:9a ULT)

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

> Now to **each one of us** grace has been given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. (Ephesians 4:7 ULT)

Events and Possession

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

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

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

In the example below, **Christ loves us**.

> Who will separate us from the **love of Christ**? (Romans 8:35)

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

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

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

> Then be afraid of the sword, because wrath brings **the punishment of the sword**. (Job 19:29a ULT)

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

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

Strategies for learning what the relationship is between the two nouns

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

Translation Strategies

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

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use an adjective to show that one noun describes the other.

> On their heads were something like **crowns of gold.** (Revelation 9:7b)
>
> > “On their heads were **gold crowns**”

(2) Use a verb to show how the two are related.

> Whoever gives you **a cup of water** to drink … will not lose his reward. (Mark 9:41 ULT)
>
> > Whoever gives you a **cup that has water in it** to drink … will not lose his reward.
>
> Wealth is worthless on **the day of wrath.** (Proverbs 11:4a ULT)
>
> > Wealth is worthless on **the day when God shows his wrath**.
> > or:
> > Wealth is worthless on the **day when God punishes people because of his wrath**.

(3) If one of the nouns refers to an event, translate it as a verb. (In the example below, there are two possession relationships, “punishment of Yahweh” and “your God.”)

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

"

Referenced in: Song of Solomon 1:1; Song of Solomon 1:5; Song of Solomon 2:7; Song of Solomon 3:10; Song of Solomon 3:11; Song of Solomon 5:16; Song of Solomon 6:11

Pronouns — When to Use Them

Description

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)

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.

> 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: Song of Solomon 1:13; Song of Solomon 2:9; Song of Solomon 2:13

Quote Markings

Description

This page answers the question: *How can quotes be marked, especially when there are quotes within quotes?*

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

Direct and Indirect Quotations (UTA PDF)

Some languages use quotation marks to mark off direct quotes from the rest of the text. English uses the mark “ immediately before a quote and ” immediately after it.

- John said, “I do not know when I will arrive.”

Quotation marks are not used with indirect quotes.

- John said that he did not know when he would arrive.

When there are several layers of quotations inside of other quotations, it might be hard for readers to understand who is saying what. Alternating two kinds of quotation marks can help careful readers to keep track of them. In English, the outermost quotation has double quote marks, and the next quotation within it has single marks. If there is a third embedded quote, that quotation again has double quotation marks.

- Mary said, “John said, ‘I do not know when I will arrive.’ ”
- Bob said, “Mary told me, ‘John said, “I do not know when I will arrive.” ’ ”

Some languages use other kinds of quotation marks: Here are some examples: , ‘ ’ „ “ ” ‹ › « » 7 — .

Examples From the Bible

The examples below show the kind of quotation markings used in the ULT.

A quotation with only one layer

A first layer direct quote has double quotation marks around it.

> So the king replied, “That is Elijah the Tishbite.” (2 Kings 1:8b ULT)

Quotations with two layers

A second layer direct quote has single quotation marks around it. We have printed it and the phrase in bold type for you to see them clearly.

> They asked him, “Who is the man who said to you, **‘Pick it up and walk’**?” (John 5:12 ULT)
>
> He sent two of the disciples, saying, “Go into the village ahead of you. As you enter, you will find a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it to me. If any one asks you, **‘Why are you untying it?’** you will say thus, **‘The Lord has need of it.’**” (Luke 19:29b-31 ULT)

A quotation with three layers

A third layer direct quote has double quotation marks around it. We have printed it in bold type for you to see them clearly.

> Abraham said, “Because I thought, ‘Surely there is no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife.’ Besides, she is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife. When God caused me to leave my father’s

> house and travel from place to place, I said to her, ‘You must show me this faithfulness as my wife: At every place where we go, say about me, “**He is my brother**.”’” (Genesis 20:11-13 ULT)

A quotation with four layers

A fourth layer direct quote has single quotation marks around it. We have printed it in bold for you to see it clearly.

> They said to him, “A man came to meet us who said to us, ‘Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, “Yahweh says this: **‘Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.’** ” ’ ” (2 Kings 1:6 ULT)

Quote Marking Strategies

Here are some ways you may be able to help readers see where each quote starts and ends so they can more easily know who said what.

(1) Alternate two kinds of quote marks to show layers of direct quotation. English alternates double quote marks and single quote marks.
(2) Translate one or some of the quotes as indirect quotes in order to use fewer quote marks, since indirect quotes do not need them. (See Direct and Indirect Quotations.)
(3) If a quotation is very long and has many layers of quotation in it, indent the main overall quote, and use quote marks only for the direct quotes inside of it.

Examples of Quote Marking Strategies Applied

(1) Alternate two kinds of quotation marks to show layers of direct quotation as shown in the ULT text below.

> They said to him, “A man came to meet us who said to us, ‘Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, “Yahweh says this: ‘Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.’”” (2 Kings 1:6 ULT)

(2) Translate one or more of the quotes as indirect quotes in order to use fewer quotation marks, since indirect quotes do not need them. In English, the word “that” can introduce an indirect quote. In the example below, everything after the word “that” is an indirect quote of what the messengers said to the king. Within that indirect quote, there are some direct quotes marked with double and single quotation marks.

> 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 came to meet them who said to them, “Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, ‘Yahweh says this: “Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.’””

(3) If a quotation is very long and has many layers of quotation in it, indent the main overall quote, and use quote marks only for the direct quotes inside of it.

> They said to him, “A man came to meet us who said to us, ‘Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, “Yahweh says this: ‘Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.’”” (2 Kings 1:6 ULT)

> > > They said to him,
> > > > A man came to meet us who said to us, “Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, ‘Yahweh says this: “Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.”’”

Next we recommend you learn about:

Quotes within Quotes (UTA PDF)

"

Referenced in: Song of Solomon 5:3

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: Song of Solomon 6:13

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 orignal 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: Song of Solomon 1:7; Song of Solomon 3:6; Song of Solomon 5:3; Song of Solomon 6:10; Song of Solomon 8:5

Simile

Description

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)

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.”

> 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: Song of Solomon 1:5; Song of Solomon 1:7; Song of Solomon 1:9; Song of Solomon 2:2; Song of Solomon 2:3; Song of Solomon 2:8; Song of Solomon 3:6; Song of Solomon 4:1; Song of Solomon 4:2; Song of Solomon 4:3; Song of Solomon 4:4; Song of Solomon 4:5; Song of Solomon 5:11; Song of Solomon 5:12; Song of Solomon 5:13; Song of Solomon 5:15; Song of Songs 6 General Notes; Song of Solomon 6:4; Song of Solomon 6:5; Song of Solomon 6:6; Song of Solomon 6:7; Song of Solomon 6:10; Song of Solomon 6:13; Song of Solomon 7:1; Song of Solomon 7:3; Song of Solomon 7:4; Song of Solomon 7:5; Song of Solomon 7:7; Song of Solomon 7:8; Song of Solomon 7:9; Song of Solomon 8:6; Song of Solomon 8:10; Song of Solomon 8:14

Statements — Other Uses

Description

This page answers the question: *What other uses are there for statements?*

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

Sentence Types (UTA PDF)

Normally statements are used to give information. Sometimes they are used in the Bible for other functions.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages would not use a statement for some of the functions that statements are used for in the Bible.

Examples From the Bible

Statements are normally used to give **information**. All of the sentences in John 1:6-8 below are statements, and their function is to give information.

> There was a man who was sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness in order to testify about the light, that all might believe through him. John was not the light, but came that he might testify about the light. (John 1:6-8 ULT)

A statement can also be used as a **command** to tell someone what to do. In the examples below, the high priest used statements with the verb "will" to tell people what to do.

> He commanded them, saying, "This is what you **must** do. A third of you who come on the Sabbath **will** keep watch over the king's house, and a third **will** be at the Sur Gate, and a third at the gate behind the guardhouse." (2 Kings 11:5 ULT)

A statement can also be used to give **instructions**. The speaker below was not just telling Joseph about something Joseph would do in the future; he was telling Joseph what he needed to do.

> She will give birth to a son, and **you will call his name Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21 ULT)

A statement can also be used to make a **request**. The man with leprosy was not just saying what Jesus was able to do. He was also asking Jesus to heal him.

> Behold, a leper came to him and bowed before him, saying, "Lord, if you are willing, **you are able to make me clean**." (Matthew 8:2 ULT)

A statement can also be used to **perform** something. By telling Adam that the ground was cursed because of him, God actually cursed it.

> ... **cursed is the ground** because of you; (Genesis 3:17b ULT)

By telling a man that his sins were forgiven, **Jesus forgave** the man's sins.

> When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "**Son, your sins are forgiven**." (Mark 2:5 ULT)

Translation Strategies

(1) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, **use a sentence type** that would express that function.
(2) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, **add a sentence type** that would express that function.

(3) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, **use a verb form** that would express that function.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, use a sentence type that would express that function.

> She will give birth to a son, and **you will call his name Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21 ULT)

The phrase “you will call his name Jesus” is an instruction. It can be translated using the sentence type of a normal instruction.

> > > She will give birth to a son. **Name him Jesus**, because he will save his people from their sins.

(2) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, add a sentence type that would express that function.

> Lord, if you are willing, **you are able to make me clean**. (Matthew 8:2 ULT)

The function of “you are able” is to make a request. In addition to the statement, a request can be added.

> > > Lord, you are able to make me clean. If you are willing, **please do so**.
> > > OR:
> > > Lord, if you are willing, **please heal me**. I know that you are able to do so.

(3) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, use a verb form that would express that function.

> She will give birth to a son, and **you will call his name Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21 ULT)
>
> > > She will give birth to a son, and **you must call his name Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins.
>
> Son, your sins are forgiven. (Mark 2:5 ULT)
>
> > > Son, I forgive your sins.
> > > OR:
> > > Son, God hereby forgives your sins.

"

Referenced in: Song of Solomon 1:4; Song of Solomon 2:4; Song of Solomon 7:8; Song of Solomon 7:9

Synecdoche

Description

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)

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 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

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: Song of Solomon 1:7; Song of Solomon 3:1; Song of Solomon 3:2; Song of Solomon 3:3; Song of Solomon 3:4; Song of Solomon 7:1

Textual Variants

Description

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)

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.

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. 15There 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: Song of Solomon 5:13

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: Song of Solomon 1:3; Song of Solomon 1:10; Song of Solomon 1:11; Song of Solomon 1:12; Song of Solomon 1:13; Song of Solomon 1:14; Song of Solomon 1:17; Song of Solomon 2:1; Song of Solomon 2:2; Song of Solomon 2:3; Song of Solomon 2:4; Song of Solomon 2:5; Song of Solomon 2:7; Song of Solomon 2:9; Song of Solomon 2:11; Song of Solomon 2:15; Song of Solomon 2:16; Song of Solomon 2:17; Song of Solomon 3:2; Song of Solomon 3:3; Song of Solomon 3:7; Song of Solomon 3:9; Song of Solomon 4:4; Song of Solomon 4:5; Song of Solomon 4:6; Song of Solomon 4:12; Song of Solomon 4:13; Song of Solomon 4:14; Song of Solomon 5:7; Song of Solomon 5:11; Song of Solomon 5:13; Song of Solomon 5:14; Song of Solomon 5:15; Song of Solomon 6:4; Song of Solomon 6:8; Song of Solomon 7:2; Song of Solomon 7:4; Song of Solomon 7:7; Song of Solomon 7:8; Song of Solomon 7:11; Song of Solomon 7:13; Song of Solomon 8:2; Song of Solomon 8:5; Song of Solomon 8:11

Unusual Uses of the Plural

The biblical languages sometimes use plural forms to refer to single objects, ideas, or people.

This page answers the question: *What are some unusual uses of the plural and how can I translate them?*

Description

Using a plural form to refer to something singular is done to show an intensified feeling about the object, idea, or person, or to show that an object or idea is extraordinary in some way. Also, sometimes a person refers to himself or herself with a plural pronoun. If the person is a king or a leader in a high position, this is to show that the person is very important and represents many people. If the person is writing a letter, such as Paul in the New Testament, this is to do the opposite. It is to avoid referring directly to himself, to avoid any sense that he is boasting or drawing attention to himself.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Many languages do not use plural forms to refer to single objects, ideas, or people. In these languages, doing so would be both wrong and confusing. Instead, they need to use a singular form and express any intended intensification in another way.

Examples From the Bible

> The tents of robbers prosper, and securities {are} to the provokers of God (Job 12:6 ULT)

Job is using the plural form **securities** to indicate that these provokers of God experience security to a supreme extent.

> Now you had cast me deep into the heart of the seas (Jonah 2:3 ULT)

Jonah refers to the sea using the plural **seas** to intensify the idea of either the sea's vastness or activity.

> The letter that you sent to **us** has been carefully read aloud before me. (Ezra 4:18 ULT)

Artaxerxes, the king of Persia, refers to himself as **us** in response to a letter sent to him.

> ...through whom [Jesus] **we** received grace and apostleship for obedience of faith among all the Gentiles (Romans 1:5 ULT)

Since this letter is from Paul alone, it is likely that he is using the plural **we** to refer to himself.

Translation Strategies

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

(1) Use a singular form instead of the plural.
(2) If the plural is used to intensify the meaning, use a singular form with another word that intensifies it such as “very” or “great” or “many.”
(3) If the plural is used to intensify or emphasize the meaning, use one of your language’s ways of doing that.

Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use a singular form instead of the plural.

> The letter that you sent to **us** has been carefully read aloud before me. (Ezra 4:18 ULT)

The letter that you sent to **me** has been carefully read aloud before me.

> ...through whom [Jesus] **we** received grace and apostleship for obedience of faith among all the Gentiles (Romans 1:5 ULT)

...through whom [Jesus] **I** received grace and apostleship for obedience of faith among all the Gentiles

(2) If the plural is used to intensify or emphasize the meaning, use a singular form with another word that intensifies it such as “very” or “great” or “many.”

> The tents of robbers prosper, and **securities {are}** to the provokers of God (Job 12:6 ULT)

The tents of robbers prosper, and **great security {is}** to the provokers of God

> Now you had cast me deep into the heart of the **seas** (Jonah 2:3 ULT)

Now you had cast me deep into the heart of the **great sea**

(3) If the plural is used to intensify or emphasize the meaning, use one of your language’s ways of doing that.

> The tents of robbers prosper, and **securities {are}** to the provokers of God (Job 12:6 ULT)

The tents of robbers prosper, and the provokers of God **enjoy complete security**

> Now you had cast me deep into the heart of the **seas** (Jonah 2:3 ULT)

Now you had cast me deep into the heart of the **raging sea**

"

Referenced in: Song of Solomon 2:5; Song of Solomon 2:9; Song of Solomon 3:1; Song of Solomon 4:15

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.

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)

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)

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: Song of Solomon 8:13

When to Keep Information Implicit

Description

This page answers the question: *When should I not make implicit information explicit?*

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

Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (UTA PDF)
Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (UTA PDF)

Sometimes it is better not to state assumed knowledge or implicit information explicitly. This page gives some direction about when not to do this.

Translation Principles

- If a speaker or author intentionally left something unclear, do not try to make it more clear.
- If the original audience did not understand what the speaker meant, do not make it so clear that your readers would find it strange that the original audience did not understand.
- If you need to explicitly state some assumed knowledge or implicit information, try to do it in a way that does not make your readers think that the original audience needed to be told those things.
- Do not make implicit information explicit if it confuses the message or leads the reader to forget what the main point is.
- Do not make assumed knowledge or implicit information explicit if your readers already understand it.

Examples From the Bible

> From the eater came forth food; and from the strong one came forth sweetness. (Judges 14:14 ULT)

This was a riddle. Samson purposely said this in a way that it would be hard for his enemies to know what it meant. Do not make it clear that the eater and the strong thing was a lion and that the sweet thing to eat was honey.

> Jesus said to them, “Take heed and beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” They reasoned among themselves saying, “It is because we did not take bread.” (Matthew 16:6-7 ULT)

Some possible implicit information here is that the disciples should beware of the false teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. But Jesus’ disciples did not understand this. They thought that Jesus was talking about real yeast and bread. So it would not be appropriate to state explicitly that the word “yeast” here refers to false teaching. The disciples did not understand what Jesus meant until they heard what Jesus said in Matthew 16:11.

> “How is it that you do not understand that I was not speaking to you about bread? Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” Then they understood that he was not telling them to beware of yeast in bread, but to beware of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. (Matthew 16:11-12 ULT)

Only after Jesus explained that he was not talking about bread did they realize that he was talking about the false teaching of the Pharisees. Therefore, it would be wrong to explicitly state the implicit information in Matthew 16:6.

Translation Strategies

Because we recommend that translators not change this kind of passage to make it more clear, this page does not have any translation strategies.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

Because we recommend that translators not change this kind of passage to make it more clear, this page does not have any translation strategies applied.

"

Referenced in: Song of Solomon 3:1; Song of Solomon 5:1; Song of Solomon 6:10; Song of Solomon 6:11; Song of Solomon 6:13; Song of Solomon 7:1; Song of Solomon 7:9; Song of Solomon 8:5; Song of Solomon 8:8; Song of Solomon 8:10; Song of Solomon 8:11; Song of Solomon 8:13; Song of Solomon 8:14

Contributors

unfoldingWord® Translation Notes Contributors

Door43 World Missions Community
Aaron Fenlason
Abner Bauman
Adam Van Goor
Alan Bird
Alan Borkenhagen
Alfred Van Dellen
Alice Wright
Allen Bair
Allyson Presswood Nance
Amanda Adams
Andrew Belcher
Andrew Johnson
Andrew Rice
Angelo Palo
Anita Moreau
April Linton
Aurora Lee
Barbara Summers
Barbara White
Becky Hancock
Beryl Carpenter
Bethany Fenlason
Betty Forbes
Bianca Elliott
Bill Cleveland
Bill Pruett
Bob Britting
Bram van den Heuvel
Brian Metzger
Bruce Bridges
Bruce Collier
Bruce Smith
Caleb Worgess
Carlyle Kilmore
Carol Pace
Carol Heim
Caroline Crawford
Caroline Fleming
Caroline S Wong
Carol Lee
Carol Moyer
Carolyn Lafferty
Catherine C Newton
Charese Jackson
Charlotte Gibson
Charlotte Hobbs

Cheryl A Chojnacki
Cheryl Stieben
Cheryl Warren
Christian Berry
Christine Harrison
Clairmene Pascal
Connie Bryan
Connie Goss
Craig Balden
Craig Lins
Craig Scott
Cynthia J Puckett
Dale Hahs
Dale Masser
Daniel Lauk
Daniel Summers
Darlene M Hopkins
Darlene Silas
David Boerschlein
David F Withee
David Glover
David J Forbes
David Mullen
David N Hanley
David Sandlin
David Shortess
David Smith
David Whisler
Debbie Nispel
Debbie Piper
Deborah Bartow
Deborah Bush
Deborah Miniard
Dennis Jackson
Dianne Forrest
Donna Borkenhagen
Donna Mullis
Douglas Hayes
Drew Curley
Ed Davis
Edgar Navera
Edward Kosky
Edward Quigley
Elaine VanRegenmorter
Elizabeth Nataly Silvestre Herbas
Ellen Lee
Emeline Thermidor
Emily Lee
Esther Roman
Esther Trew
Esther Zirk
Ethel Lynn Baker
Evangeline Puen
Evelyn Wildgust
Fletcher Coleman

Freda Dibble
Gail Spell
Gary Greer
Gary Shogren
Gay Ellen Stulp
Gene Gossman
George Arlyn Briggs
Gerald L. Naughton
Glen Tallent
Grace Balwit
Grace Bird
Greg Stoffregen
Gretchen Stencil
Hallie Miller
Harry Harriss
Heather Hicks
Helen Morse
Hendrik deVries
Henry Bult
Henry Whitney
Hilary O'Sullivan
Ibrahim Audu
Ines Gipson
Irene J Dodson
Jackie Jones
Jacqueline Bartley
James Giddens
James Pedersen
James Pohlig
James Roe
Janet O'Herron
Janice Connor
Jaqueline Rotruck
Jeanette Friesen
Jeff Graf
Jeff Kennedy
Jeff Martin
Jennifer Cunneen
Jenny Thomas
Jerry Lund
Jessica Lauk
Jim Frederick
Jim Lee
Jimmy Warren
Jim Rotruck
Jim Swartzentruber
Jody Garcia
Joe Chater
Joel Bryan
Joey Howell
John Anderson
John Geddis
John D Rogers
John Hutchins
John Luton

John Pace
John P Tornifolio
Jolene Valeu
Jon Haahr
Joseph Fithian
Joseph Greene
Joseph Wharton
Joshua Berkowitz
Joshua Calhoun
Joshua Rister
Josh Wondra
Joy Anderson
Joyce Jacobs
Joyce Pedersen
JT Crowder
Judi Brodeen
Judith Cline
Judith C Yon
Julia N Bult
Patty Li
Julie Susanto
Kahar Barat
Kannahi Sellers
Kara Anderson
Karen Davie
Karen Dreesen
Karen Fabean
Karen Riecks
Karen Smith
Karen Turner
Kathleen Glover
Kathryn Hendrix
Kathy Mentink
Katrina Geurink
Kay Myers
Kelly Strong
Ken Haugh
Kim Puterbaugh
Kristin Butts Page
Kristin Rinne
Kwesi Opoku-debrah
Langston Spell
Larry Sallee
Lawrence Lipe
Lee Sipe
Leonard Smith
Lester Harper
Lia Hadley
Linda Buckman
Linda Dale Barton
Linda Havemeier
Linda Homer
Linda Lee Sebastien
Linn Peterson
Liz Dakota

Lloyd Box
Luis Keelin
Madeline Kilmore
Maggie D Paul
Marc Nelson
Mardi Welo
Margo Hoffman
Marilyn Cook
Marjean Swann
Marjorie Francis
Mark Albertini
Mark Chapman
Mark Thomas
Marselene Norton
Mary Jane Davis
Mary Jean Stout
Mary Landon
Mary Scarborough
Megan Kidwell
Melissa Roe
Merton Dibble
Meseret Abraham-Zemede
Michael Bush
Michael Connor
Michael Francis
Michael Geurink
Mike Tisdell
Mickey White
Miel Horrilleno
Monique Greer
Morgan Mellette
Morris Anderson
Nancy C. Naughton
Nancy Neu
Nancy VanCott
Neal Snook
Nicholas Scovil
Nick Dettman
Nils Friberg
Noah Crabtree
Pamela B Johnston
Pamela Nungesser
Pamela Roberts
Pam Gullifer
Pat Ankney
Pat Giddens
Patricia Brougher
Patricia Carson
Patricia Cleveland
Patricia Foster
Patricia Middlebrooks
Paul Mellema
Paula Carlson
Paula Oestreich
Paul Holloway

Paul Nungesser
Peggy Anderson
Peggyrose Swartzentruber
Peter Polloni
Phillip Harms
Phyllis Mortensen
Priscilla Enggren
Rachel Agheyisi
Rachel Ropp
Raif Turner
Ray Puen
Reina Y Mora
Rene Bahrenfuss
Renee Triplett
Rhonda Bartels
Richard Beatty
Richard Moreau
Richard Rutter
Richard Stevens
Rick Keaton
Robby Little
Robert W Johnson
Robert Hunt, Freely-Given.org
Rochelle Hook
Rodney White
Rolaine Franz
Ronald D Hook
Rosario Baria
Roxann Carey
Roxanne Pittard
Ruben Michael Garay
Russell Isham
Russ Perry
Ruth Calo
Ruth E Withee
Ruth Montgomery
Ryan Blizek
Sam Todd
Samuel Njuguna
Sandy Anderson
Sandy Blanes
Sara Giesmann
Sara Van Cott (Barnes)
Sharon Johnson
Sharon Peterson
Sharon Shortess
Shelly Harms
Sherie Nelson
Sherman Sebastien
Sherry Mosher
Stacey Swanson
Steve Gibbs
Steve Mercier
Susan Langohr
Susan Quigley

Susan Snook
Suzanne Richards
Sylvia Thomas
Sze Suze Lau
Tabitha Price
Tammy L Enns
Tammy White
Teresa Everett-Leone
Teresa Linn
Terri Collins
Theresa Baker
Thomas Jopling
Thomas Nickell
Thomas Warren
Tim Coleman
Tim Ingram
Tim Linn
Tim Lovestrand
Tim Mentink
Tom Penry
Tom William Warren
Toni Shuma
Tracie Pogue
Tricia Coffman
Vicki Ivester
Victoria G DeKraker
Victor M Prieto
Vivian Kamph
Vivian Richardson
Ward Pyles
Warren Blaisdell
Wayne Homer
Wendy Coleman
Wendy Colon
Wilbur Zirk
Wil Gipson
William Carson
William Cline
William Dickerson
William Smitherman
William Wilder
Yvonne Tallent

unfoldingWord® Literal Text Contributors

Nicholas Alsop
Scott Bayer
Larry T Brooks, M.Div., Assemblies of God Theological Seminary
Matt Carlton
George "Drew" Curley, M.Div., PhD, Professor of Biblical Languages
Dan Dennison
Jamie Duguid
Paul M Fahnestock, M.Div. Reformed Theological Seminary, D.Min. Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
Michael Francis
Laura Glassel, MA in Bible Translation

Jesse Griffin, BA Biblical Studies, MA Biblical Languages
Jesse Harris
C. Harry Harriss, M.Div.
Alrick G. Headley, M.Div., Th.M.
Bram van den Heuvel, M.A.
John Huffman
D. Allen Hutchison, MA in Old Testament, MA in New Testament
Jack Messarra
Gene Mullen
Adam W. Nagelvoort, M.Div. Academic Ministries, Columbia International University
Timothy Neu, Ph.D. Biblical Studies
Kristy Nickell
Tom Nickell
Elizabeth Oakes, BA in Religious Studies, Linguistics
Perry Oakes, PhD in Old Testament, MA in Linguistics
James N. Pohlig, M.Div., MA in Linguistics, D. Litt. in Biblical Languages
Ward Pyles, M.Div., Western Baptist Theological Seminary
Susan Quigley, MA in Linguistics
Dean Ropp
Joel D. Ruark, M.A.Th., Th.M., Ph.D. in Old Testament, University of Stellenbosch
Larry Sallee, Th.M Dallas Theological Seminary, D.Min. Columbia Biblical Seminary
Peter Smircich, BA Philosophy
Doug Smith, M.T.S., M.Div., Th.M., Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
Leonard Smith
Suzanna Smith
Tim Span
Dave Statezni, BA Orig langs., M.Div. Fuller Theological Seminary
Maria Tijerina
David Trombold, M. Div.
Aaron Valdizan, M.Div., Th.M. in Old Testament, The Masters Seminary
James Vigen
Hendrik "Henry" de Vries
Thomas Warren, M.Div., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, D.Min, Reformed Theological Seminary
Angela Westmoreland, M.A. in Theological Studies (Biblical Language track)
Henry Whitney, BA Linguistics
Benjamin Wright, MA Applied Linguistics, Dallas International University
Grant Ailie, BA Biblical Studies, M.Div.
Door43 World Missions Community

unfoldingWord® Simplified Text Contributors

Nicholas Alsop
Larry T Brooks, M.Div., Assemblies of God Theological Seminary
Matt Carlton
George "Drew" Curley, M.Div., PhD, Professor of Biblical Languages
Paul M Fahnestock, M.Div. Reformed Theological Seminary, D. Min. Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
Michael Francis
Laura Glassel, MA in Bible Translation
Kailey Gregory
Jesse Griffin, BA Biblical Studies, MA Biblical Languages
C. Harry Harriss, M.Div.
Alrick G. Headley, M.Div., Th.M.
Bram van den Heuvel, M.A.
John Huffman
D. Allen Hutchison, MA in Old Testament, MA in New Testament

Robert Hunt, Freely-Given.org
Demsin Lachin
Jack Messarra
Gene Mullen
Adam W. Nagelvoort, M.Div. Academic Ministries, Columbia International University
Timothy Neu, Ph.D. Biblical Studies
Kristy Nickell
Tom Nickell
Elizabeth Oakes, BA in Religious Studies, Linguistics
Perry Oakes, PhD in Old Testament, MA in Linguistics
James N. Pohlig, M.Div., MA in Linguistics, D. Litt. in Biblical Languages
Ward Pyles, M.Div., Western Baptist Theological Seminary
Susan Quigley, MA in Linguistics
Dean Ropp
Joel D. Ruark, M.A.Th., Th.M., Ph.D. in Old Testament, University of Stellenbosch
Larry Sallee, Th.M Dallas Theological Seminary, D.Min. Columbia Biblical Seminary
Peter Smircich, BA Philosophy
Christopher Smith, M.A.T.S. Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Ph.D. Boston College
Leonard Smith
Dave Statezni, BA Orig langs., M.Div. Fuller Theological Seminary
David Trombold, M. Div.
James Vigen
Hendrik ‐ Henry‐ de Vries
Thomas Warren, M.Div., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, D.Min, Reformed Theological Seminary
Angela Westmoreland, M.A. in Theological Studies (Biblical Language track)
Henry Whitney, BA Linguistics
Benjamin Wright, MA Applied Linguistics, Dallas International University
Door43 World Missions Community

unfoldingWord® Translation Academy Contributors

Jesse Griffin, BA in Biblical Studies, MA in Biblical Languages
Perry Oakes, PhD in Old Testament, MA in Linguistics, MA in Theology, BA in Biblical Studies
Susan Quigley, MA in Linguistics
Henry Whitney, BA in Linguistics
James N. Pohlig, M.Div., MA in Linguistics, D. Litt. in Biblical Languages
Ben Jore, BA Biblical Studies, M.Div.
Joel D. Ruark, PhD in Old Testament, MA in Theology
Todd L. Price, PhD in New Testament/Linguistics
Bev Staley
Carol Brinneman
Jody Garcia
Kara Anderson
Kim Puterbaugh
Lizz Carlton
Door43 World Missions Community

unfoldingWord® Translation Words Contributors

Andrew Belcher
David Book
Jesse Griffin, BA Biblical Studies, MA Biblical Languages
Henry Whitney, Bible translator, Papua New Guinea, 1982-2000
Larry Sallee, Th.M Dallas Theological Seminary, D.Min. Columbia Biblical Seminary

Lizz Carlton
Jan Zanutto
Matthew Latham
Perry Oakes, PhD in Old Testament, MA in Linguistics
Richard Joki
Door43 World Missions Community

unfoldingWord® Translation Words Links Contributors

Door43 World Missions Community
Jesse Griffin (BA Biblical Studies, Liberty University; MA Biblical Languages, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary)
Perry Oakes (BA Biblical Studies, Taylor University; MA Theology, Fuller Seminary; MA Linguistics, University of Texas at Arlington; PhD Old Testament, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary)
Larry Sallee (Th.M Dallas Theological Seminary, D.Min. Columbia Biblical Seminary)
Joel D. Ruark (M.A.Th. Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary; Th.M. Stellenbosch University; Ph.D. Candidate in Old Testament Studies, Stellenbosch University)