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Exodus

Version 86

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Exodus

Introduction to Exodus

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of Exodus

Israel in Egypt; preparing to depart from slavery (1–11)

- First genealogy (1:1–6)
- Israel as slaves in Egypt (1:7–22)
- Moses' history to the time of the Exodus (2:1–4:26)
- Israel suffers in Egypt (4:27–6:13)
- Second genealogy (6:14–27)
- Moses and Aaron go to Pharaoh (6:28–7:25)
- The plagues (8:1–11:10)

Instructions for celebrating the Passover (12:1–30)
From Egypt to Mount Sinai (12:31–18:27)

- The Passover; preparing to leave Egypt; leaving Egypt (12:31–50, 13:1–22)
- Journey from Egypt to Mount Sinai (14:1–18:27)

Mount Sinai and the Law (19–40)

- Preparing for the covenant (19:1–25)
- The Ten Commandments (20:1–17)
- The covenant described (20:18–23:33)
- The people agree to the covenant; Moses returns to Mount Sinai (24:1–18)
- Design of the Dwelling and its furnishings; what was required of those who serve in it; dwelling functions (25:1–31:18)
- The golden calf; Moses prays for the people (32:1–33:22)
- The covenant described again (34:1–35)
- Making of the ark and its furnishings (35:1–38:31) and priestly garments (39:1–43, 40:1–33)
- The cloud (40:34–38)

What is the book of Exodus about?

Exodus continues the story of the previous book, Genesis. The first half of Exodus is about how Yahweh made Abraham's descendants into a nation. This nation, which would be called "Israel," was meant to belong to Yahweh and worship him. The second half of Exodus describes how God gave the Israelites his law through Moses. The law of Moses told the Israelites how to obey and worship Yahweh properly.

The book of Exodus tells how the Israelites were to build the Dwelling. The Dwelling was a tent where Yahweh would be among his people. The Israelites worshiped and sacrificed animals to Yahweh at the Dwelling. (See: [[rc:*///tw/dict/bible/kt/lawofmoses]] and [[rc:*///tw/dict/bible/kt/tabernacle]])

How should the title of this book be translated?

"Exodus" means "exit" or "departure." Translators may translate this title in a way that can communicate its subject clearly, for example, "About the Israelites Leaving Egypt" or "How the Israelites Left the Land of Egypt." (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

Who wrote the book of Exodus?

The writers of both the Old and New Testaments present Moses as being very involved with writing the book of Exodus. Since ancient times, both Jews and Christians have thought that Moses wrote Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

Why did Moses write so much about God delivering or rescuing the people of Israel?

Moses wrote much about God rescuing his people from the Egyptians to show that Yahweh is very powerful. Egypt was a very powerful nation in the region at that time, but Yahweh was still able to free the Israelites from the Egyptians. Also, by rescuing the Israelites, Yahweh showed that he had chosen them as his people and that they should worship him.

How does the book of Exodus show the fulfillment of the promises given to Abraham?

The book of Exodus shows God beginning to fulfill his promise to Abraham. In Genesis, God promised Abraham that he would have many descendants and that they would become a large nation. When God rescued the Israelites from the Egyptians, he took them to Mount Sinai. There he made a covenant with them, and they became the nation that belonged to Yahweh.

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What was the Jewish Passover?

The Jewish Passover was a religious festival. Yahweh commanded the Israelites to celebrate it every year. Passover was a time to remember how God rescued Israel from the Egyptians. The first Passover meal was eaten in the evening just before they left Egypt. (See: **Passover (p.1482)**)

What was the law of Moses to the people of Israel?

The law of Moses instructed the people of Israel about what Yahweh required them to do as his people. In the law, God told the people how they should live so that they would honor him. He also instructed them about their need to offer animal sacrifices. God required these sacrifices so that he could forgive their sins and continue living among them. The law also described the duties of the priests and told how to build the Dwelling.

What did it mean that Israel was to be a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (19:6 ULT)?

Israel was a holy nation because Yahweh separated them from all other nations to belong to him. They were to honor and worship him only. This made them different from all the other nations of the world; the other nations worshiped many false gods.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

Thus says Yahweh

This phrase is used many times in the Old Testament to introduce Yahweh's speech. Your team should pick a standard translation. See Chapter 4 Introduction for more information.

Pharaoh's stubborn heart

Between chapters 4 and 14, there are 18 cases where Pharaoh's heart is described as strong (11x), heavy (6x), or hard (1x), and one case where the Egyptians' hearts are described as strong. These are metaphors for being stubborn, that is, being unwilling to obey Yahweh or even to do what is clearly in his own and Egypt's best interest. Many cultures have similar metaphors, but not all will use the same body part. Within these cases, six times there is a neutral description that Pharaoh was stubborn, without saying anyone made him so (7:13, 7:14, 7:22, 8:19, 9:7, 9:35); three times Pharaoh makes himself stubborn (8:15, 8:32, 9:34); and ten times Yahweh makes Pharaoh/the Egyptians stubborn (4:21, 7:3, 9:12, 10:1, 10:20, 10:27, 11:10, 14:4, 14:8, 14:17).

Why are the details of the construction of the Dwelling in Exodus 25–32 repeated in Exodus 35–40?

In Exodus 25–32, God describes exactly how the Dwelling was to be built. The details were repeated in Exodus 35–40 in the description of the actual construction. This showed that the people were careful to do exactly as God commanded.

Are the events in the order that they actually happened?

Most, but not all, of the events in the book of Exodus are told in the order that they actually happened. Translators may need to make it clear when the events are in an unusual order.

What does it mean that God "lived" among his people?

The book of Exodus presents God as living in the Dwelling among the nation of Israel. God is everywhere, but he lived among the Israelites in a special way. God dwelled with the Israelites because they belonged to him. He promised to lead them and bless them. In return, the people were to worship him and honor him.

Exodus 1

Exodus 1 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

This chapter is intended to form a smooth transition from the last chapter of the book of Genesis.

- v. 1–7: Jacob's family grows
- v. 8–22: Pharaoh oppresses the Israelites and tries to limit the Israelites' growth

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Israel's growth

Israel grew in number. This was the beginning of God's fulfilling his promises to Abraham. It also caused the Pharaoh to worry that there would be more Israelites than Egyptians, with the result that the Egyptians would be unable to defend themselves against so many people. Pharaoh tried to kill all of the male babies so they would not become soldiers who fought against him. (See: [[rc:*///tw/dict/bible/kt/fulfill]] and [[rc:*///tw/dict/bible/kt/covenant]])

Translation Issues in This Chapter

- "All of the descendants of Jacob were 70 in number" This number included both Jacob's children and grandchildren. It may cause confusion, but it is important to remember Jacob only had 12 sons.
- Starting from verse 7, the terms **Hebrews** and **sons of Israel** both refer to the Israelite nation or people group.
- God blesses the Hebrew midwives for lying to the wicked Pharaoh. Translators should not attempt to hide this. They showed that they feared God by disobeying a wicked order in order to preserve the lives of God's people.
- Pharaoh is a specifically Egyptian word for their kings (and queens).

Exodus 1:1

Verses 1–7 are background information for the story. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.1289)**)

the ones who came & They came in

The words translated as **came in** could also be translated as “went in.” Use whichever form is most natural in your language. (See: **Go and Come (p.1362)**)

Israel, & Jacob

Jacob and **Israel** are two names for the same man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

and his house

Here, **house** refers to all of the people who live together, usually a large family with servants. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [and his household] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 1:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 1:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 1:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 1:5

And all the lives going out of the loins of Jacob, were 70 lives

Here, **lives** refers to people (specifically, men); **going out of the loins of Jacob** is a reference to these people as being in his seed or semen and produced through his sexual acts–therefore meaning they are his descendants. See also Hebrews 7:9–10. Alternate translation: [And all the male descendants of Jacob numbered 70.] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 1:6

And & died

They did not die immediately. Jacob and his sons spent the rest of their lives in Egypt and died there. If necessary, use a transition word that conveys that some time passed. (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p. 1323)**)

and all his brothers

All his brothers includes ten older brothers and one younger brother. If your language has different words for those, you can say, “his ten older brothers and his younger brother” (See: **Kinship (p.1391)**)

Exodus 1:7

And the sons of Israel

This is the first of many times in this book that **sons of Israel** refers to the Israelite nation or people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [And the people of Israel] or [And the Israelites] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

were fruitful and propagated and multiplied and were mighty

All of these verbs mean similar things; they are used together to emphasize that the Israelites became very numerous. If your language does not have as many words that mean the same thing, you can use fewer words and express the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [had many children and became strong] (See: **Doublet (p.1338)**)

were fruitful & and multiplied & and the land was filled

Compare your translation of **fruitful ... and multiplied ... and the land was filled** here to Genesis 1:28, 9:1, and 9:7, and especially Genesis 35:11 where God renamed Jacob to be called Israel.

were fruitful and propagated

The birth of children to the Israelites is spoken of as if they were plants that were producing fruit and causing new plants to grow around them. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [had many children] or [gave birth to many children] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

with great greatness

If your language does not use an abstract noun for this idea, you can express the idea behind the abstract noun **greatness** in another way. Alternate translation: [and were very great] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

and the land was filled with them

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 Alternate translation: [and they filled the land] (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1280)**)

with great greatness

Here the same word is used twice to emphasize how many the Israelite people had become. If your language does not repeat words like this, express the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [with much power] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

with them

Here, **them** refers to the Israelites. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

Exodus 1:8

And & arose

This introduces a new event that happened some time after the events the story has just related. The story does not say how long after those events this new event happened. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

a new king

The story begins with the new king. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new character. (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1385)**)

And a new king arose over Egypt

Here, **Egypt** refers to the place and the people of Egypt. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [And a new king began to rule over the Egyptians and the country of Egypt] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

did not know Joseph

Here, **Joseph** refers to both the person Joseph and to all of the good things that he did for Egypt. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. See the UST. (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 1:9

Behold

Behold draws special attention to what is about to be said. Use a way of drawing people's attention that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [Listen] (See: **Exclamations (p.1347)**)

his people

The people whom the king rules over and who are also part of his group (probably shared ethnicity, tribe, or clan) rather than the Israelite group are spoken of as if they belonged to the king. This is an instance of the possessive of social relationship. (See: **Possession (p.1425)**)

his people

There is some ambiguity as to whom exactly Pharaoh was addressing. It could have been: (1) the people who lived in Egypt, the Egyptians or (2) some group of "his people" like his advisors, generals, nobles, or friends and family. Even if option 1 is meant, it is quite possible that he actually spoke to some smaller group of representatives, as in option 2.

compared to us

Use a way that is natural in your language to compare non-specific sizes of groups of people. Alternate translation: [and much greater than us]

Behold

Beginning from **behold** and extending to the end of 1:10 is a direct quotation of what the king said. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with an opening first-level quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the beginning of a quotation. There may be other quotations in this chapter; they will be marked by the same punctuation, but they will not have their own notes. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1436)**)

Exodus 1:10

let us act wisely & the ones hating us, & with us

The word **us** is inclusive and refers to the king and his people, the Egyptians. Your language may require you to mark these forms. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1349)**)

toward him, & he multiplies, & and he & adds himself & and he fights & and he leaves

Here, **him, he**, and **himself** refer to the Israelite people. The pronouns agree grammatically with the singular "people" in the original. This occurs in many places in Exodus. If this is confusing in your language, you can use the plural, as in the UST. (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1304)**)

lest he multiplies, and it happens that a battle occurs

The king suggests a combination of two hypothetical events: 1. There are even more Israelites, 2. There is a battle. These are followed by a series of undesirable consequences: 3. The Israelites join an enemy, 4. The Israelites attack the Egyptians, 5. The Israelites leave Egypt. While the series of consequences is also technically hypothetical, the king's language indicates that if 1–2 happen, then 3–5 are certain. Use language that makes it clear that the first two events are hypothetical and that the next three are consequences that could be expected if the first two events happen. (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1318)**)

and he leaves from the land

Alternate translation: [and he leaves Egypt]

Exodus 1:11

overseers of

Overseers were Egyptians whose job it was to force the Israelites to do hard work.

labor gangs

Here the plural means groups. Alternate translation: [work crews]

in order to afflict him by their burdens

Alternate translation: [to force the Israelites to do hard work for the Egyptians]

cities of storage

These were places where the leaders put away food and other important things to keep them safe. Alternate translation: [cities in which to put away things to keep them safe]

cities of storage

The possessive is objective; storage of goods is what occurs in the cities. Alternate translation: [cities for storing things] (See: **Possession (p.1425)**)

Exodus 1:12

And insofar as they afflicted him, thus he multiplied and thus he spread out

This sentence expresses a result that is the opposite of what the king expected. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1313)**)

And they felt a sickening dread from the face of

If your language does not use an abstract noun for this idea, you can express the idea behind the abstract noun **dread** in another way. Alternate translation: [And they were very afraid of the face of] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p. 1278)**)

from the face of the sons of Israel

Here, **face** means the presence of a person. The phrase means that the Egyptians were afraid of the Israelites' existence in their country. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [of the growing Israelite population] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 1:13

And the Egyptians enslaved the sons of Israel with rigor

Here, **rigor** is a noun used to modify the verb **enslaved**. **Rigor** could refer either to how hard the work was or how unkindly the Egyptians treated the Israelites. If your language does not use an abstract noun for this idea, you can express the idea behind it in another way. Alternate translation: [And the Egyptians made the sons of Israel work very hard] or [And harshly, the Egyptians made the sons of Israel work] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

Exodus 1:14

And they embittered their lives

The difficult lives of the Israelites are spoken of as if their daily lives were bitter food that was difficult to eat. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And they made their lives very difficult] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

by hard slavery

If your language does not use an abstract noun for this idea, you can express the idea behind **slavery** in another way. Alternate translation: [by making them work hard as slaves] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

by mortar

Mortar is a mixture of lime with cement, sand, and water, used in building to bond bricks or stones. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

and by bricks

Bricks are blocks made of clay or mud with straw in them. They are hardened in the sun or in another manner before they are used for building. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

all their work with which they worked for them was with rigor

See how you translated this in 1:13. Alternate translation: [the Egyptians made them work very hard] or [the Egyptians forced them to work very hard]

And they embittered & for them

Here, **they** and **them** refer to the Egyptians. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

their lives & their work & they worked

Here, **their** and **they** refer to the Israelites. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

was with rigor

See how you translated **rigor** in the previous verse. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

Exodus 1:15

This sentence introduces a new event in the story. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

to the & midwives

Midwives were women who helped a pregnant woman give birth to a baby.

was Shiphrah, & was Puah

Shiphrah and **Puah** are women's names. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

was Shiphrah, & was Puah

The midwives are introduced here as new participants in the story. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new character. (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1385)**)

Exodus 1:16

And he said

In the UST, the phrase and **the king said**, is combined with “spoke” from 1:15 (ULT) because the verb for “say” is used twice before he speaks. Having two speech verbs may be strange in some languages. If it would be unnatural to say that the king spoke or said words twice, you may leave one off.

When you assist & as midwives and you see & then you shall cause & to die

The king is speaking to the two midwives, so the form of **you** is plural. If your language uses different forms of “you” depending on the number of people addressed, use a dual or plural form here. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/ Plural (p.1354)**)

on the birth stool

Women sat on this short stool as they gave birth. Therefore, it was associated with birth. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [in the birthing process] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

if he is a son, then you shall cause him to die, but if she is a daughter, then she shall live

These two statements are hypothetical conditions (starting at **if**) with instructions for what the midwives should do in each situation (starting at **then**). Use a natural form in your language for hypothetical situations connected to instructions. (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1318)**)

Exodus 1:17

But & feared

But introduces a contrast to what was expected. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast.
(See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1313)**)

Exodus 1:18

to the midwives

Women whose work is to help other woman give birth to a baby are called **midwives**. See how you translated this in Exodus 1:15.

and he said to them, “Why have you done this thing, and let the sons live

If it would be more natural in your language, you could translate this quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: [and he asked them why they were letting the sons live.] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p. 1333)**)

Why have you done this thing, and let the sons live

Alternate translation: [Why have you not killed the baby boys?]

have you done

This **you** is plural. The king is speaking to the two midwives. If your language uses different forms of “you” depending on the number of people addressed, use a dual or plural form here. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

Exodus 1:19

Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women: for they are lively, and, before the midwife comes to them, they have given birth

The midwives give a reason, **the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women**, and then they expand on that reason, **for they are lively** (or energetic), with the result that **before the midwife comes to them, they have given birth.** (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1320)**)

And the midwives said

Here, **midwives said** means that a midwife spoke representing the thoughts of the group. It may not make sense in your language to say that multiple people said something, so you may need to translate it in the singular (See: UST). (See: **Synecdoche (p.1456)**)

the midwives

These were women who helped a woman give birth to a baby. See how you translated this in Exodus 1:15.

Exodus 1:20

to the midwives

These were women who helped a woman give birth to a baby. See how you translated this in Exodus 1:15.

And the people multiplied and became very mighty

This sentence gives background information about the events at the time. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.1289)**)

And & multiplied and became very mighty

These words mean similar things and are used together to emphasize their numeric growth. If your language does not have as many words that mean the same thing, you can use fewer words and express the emphasis in another way. (See: **Doublet (p.1338)**)

And God caused good to the midwives

This phrase is more logically connected to the statements in verse 21. It describes the result of the midwives fearing God with a general statement. If it would be more natural in your language, you could rearrange verses 20–21 so that the reason (verses 21) comes before both the general and specific results. (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1320)**)

Exodus 1:21

since the midwives feared God

This is the reason for what God did. If it would be more natural in your language, you could rearrange verses 20–21 so that the reason (verses 21) comes before both the general and specific results. (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1320)**)

that he made houses for them

This describes the result of the midwives fearing God with a specific statement. If it would be more natural in your language, you could rearrange verses 20–21 so that the reason (verses 21) comes before both the general and specific results. (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1320)**)

houses

Alternate translation: [households]

Exodus 1:22

You shall throw every newborn son into the river

This order was given in order to drown the male Hebrew children. The full meaning of this may be made explicit. Alternate translation: [You must dispose of each new baby boy in the river so he will drown] or [Drown each baby boy in the river when he is born] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

And Pharaoh commanded to all of his people, saying, “You shall throw every newborn son into the river, but every daughter you shall let live

From **You shall** to the end of the verse is a direct quote of Pharaoh’s speech. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with first-level quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation. However, it could be translated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: [And Pharaoh commanded all of his people to throw every baby boy into the river, but to let every girl live.] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1333)**)

You shall throw & you shall let live

The uses of the word **you** here refer to all the Egyptians. If your language uses different forms of “you” depending on the number of people addressed, use a plural form here. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

Exodus 2

Exodus 2 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

- v. 1–10: Moses' birth and early life
- v. 11–15: Moses' attempted intervention and flight
- v. 16–22: Moses settles in Midian
- v. 23–25: God sees the Israelites' plight

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Covenant

At the end of the chapter, God begins to relate to the Israelites based on his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Identification of participants

- Moses is the only participant named in most of this chapter. This is because many of the participants play very minor roles and because this part of the story is focusing on Moses' life.

Moses' heritage

In the first part of this chapter, Pharaoh's daughter recognizes Moses as being a Hebrew, but in the last part of this chapter, the Midianites believe him to be an Egyptian.

Ironic situations

- While Pharaoh tried to diminish the power of the Israelites by killing all of their baby boys, God used Pharaoh's own daughter to save Moses.
- Moses believes he is meant to be the rescuer of his people, but they reject him. Ultimately, Moses was correct, but the people rejected him at this point (See: Acts 7).

Exodus 2:1

And & went

A new scene begins here. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

a man & a daughter of

These are new participants. They remain unnamed until Exodus 6:20 where they are identified as Amram and Jochebed. For now it is best to leave them unnamed in your language, if possible. (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1385)**)

and took a daughter of Levi

Here, **took a daughter** is an idiom for marrying. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language. (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Exodus 2:2

good

Alternate translation: [pleasing] or [fine]

And she saw & and she hid him

Hiding the boy was a result of seeing that he was good. Alternate translation: [Since she saw ... she hid him] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1320)**)

three

3 (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

Exodus 2:3

an ark of papyrus reeds

The **ark** is a basket made from a tall grass (**papyrus reeds**) that grows by the Nile River in Egypt. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

and she daubed it with bitumen and with pitch

You could explicitly state that this was to keep out water. Alternate translation: [and she daubed it with bitumen and with pitch to keep water from getting into it] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

and she daubed it

This means that she applied a waterproof coating. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

with bitumen

This is a sticky black substance made from oil. It can be used to keep out water. Alternate translation: [with tar] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

and with pitch

This is a sticky brown or black substance that can be made from tree sap. It too can be used to keep out water. Alternate translation: [and with tar] or [and with resin] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

in the reeds

These **reeds** were a type of tall grass with wide blades that formed a flat surface when woven together. They grew in flat, wet areas. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 2:4

And his sister stationed herself at a distance

This means she stood far enough away so that she would not be noticed, but close enough to see the ark. Use a word that expresses this sort of distance in your language.

at a distance

This probably means somewhere in the reeds where she could see the basket, but no one would see her. If your language does not use an abstract noun for this idea, you can express the idea behind the abstract noun **distance** in another way. Alternate translation: [not far away] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

his sister

Here, the actions of **his sister** show that she was older. If your language uses a different term for siblings based on their relative ages or the gender of the siblings or both, use one that means “a boy’s older sister.” (See: **Kinship (p. 1391)**)

to know what would be done to him

This is her purpose in being close by. Use a natural way in your language for indicating purpose. Alternate translation: [in order to learn what would happen to him] (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.1315)**)

Exodus 2:5

And & came down

Came down may be literal or figurative, as important places are often considered to be in a higher place. This means she came from her home, probably Pharaoh's palace. If a perspective is required for Pharaoh's daughter, you may choose go or come as works best in your language. "Come" is better as the scene is at the river and she comes to the scene location. However, you also need to consider your language's way of introducing new participants. (See: **Go and Come (p.1362)**)

And a daughter of Pharaoh came down

The **daughter of Pharaoh** is introduced here as a new participant. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new character. (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1385)**)

and her young women

These women are introduced here as new participants; however, they are not mentioned again after this verse. (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1385)**)

along the hand of the river

Here, **hand** is a metaphor for side or, as relating to a river, shore. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could simply translate the meaning. (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

and her young women

These were the young women whose job it was to be with her and make sure nothing bad happened to her.

and she took it

It is not clear who is meant by **she** here, either Pharaoh's daughter or the servant. It is likely that Pharaoh's daughter remains the subject. Alternate translation: [and she took the ark from her slave] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

Exodus 2:6

and behold

The word **behold** signals the surprising information that follows. (See: **Exclamations (p.1347)**)

And she had compassion on him

The text does not state exactly what caused her to have compassion on the baby. If a reason must be provided in your language, it should be connected to either his crying (this is the better option) or that he was a “good” baby (2:2). (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1320)**)

This one is from the children of the Hebrews

This is a direct quotation. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with first-level quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation. It seems to have been said loud enough for the baby’s sister to hear. There may be other quotations in this chapter; they will be marked by the same punctuation, but they will not have their own notes. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1436)**)

Exodus 2:7

and call for you a nursing woman from the Hebrews

This is a suggestive question. The child's sister is hopeful that Pharaoh's daughter does not yet have a plan for the baby beyond saving his life. However, it is still a true question, for without Pharaoh's daughter's permission, the child's sister will not be able to fetch the woman. If your language has a way of forming questions that are also suggestions, use it here.

nursing & And she could cause & to nurse

Here, **nursing** or **to nurse** means to feed with milk from the breast.

And she could cause the child to nurse for you

This is the purpose of the sister's proposal. Use a natural way in your language for indicating purpose. Alternate translation: [And she could nurse the infant for you] (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.1315)**)

Exodus 2:8

Go.” And & went

The girl left Pharaoh’s daughter to go to the child’s mother. The girl was almost certainly on foot. Use verbs of motion that express this. (See: **Go and Come (p.1362)**)

Exodus 2:9

to her

The child's mother is reintroduced as a participant. Use the natural form in your language for reintroducing a character. Alternate translation: [to the baby's mother] (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1385)**)

your wages

This refers to payment that Pharaoh's daughter would give to the mother in exchange for her service of nursing the baby.

And & took & and caused him to nurse

The mother's acceptance of the deal is implied. You could make it explicit, as in the UST. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 2:10

And the child grew older, and she brought him

And the child grew older marks an unspecified amount of time. He would have stayed with his mother at least until he was weaned (no longer feeding on his mother's milk). (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p. 1323)**)

and he became as a son to her

Alternate translation: [and he became the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter]

and he became as a son to her. And she called his name Moses

These events were likely simultaneous, because her act of naming him may have been what made him become **as a son to her**. Consider using a conjunction that does not make a great separation between these events. (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.1325)**)

Moses, and she said, "For out of the water I drew him

Translators may add a footnote that says, "The name Moses sounds like the Hebrew word that means 'draw out.'"

and she said, "For out of the water I drew him

For begins a direct quotation. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with first-level quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation. If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: [because she said she drew him out of the water] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1333)**)

Exodus 2:11

And it happened in those days that Moses had grown up. And he went out

A significant amount of time has passed; later texts state that Moses was 40 years old at this point. Alternate translation: [Many years later, once Moses was grown, he went out] (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1323)**)

And it happened in those days

This introduces a new event in the story. In your language, use a phrase that indicates a new event occurring after significant time has passed. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

And he went out

The UST supplies a probable location that he **went out** from; it could also have been simply out from the Egyptian area or out to the work area or cities. Use go or come as appropriate in your language. (See: **Go and Come (p. 1362)**)

striking a Hebrew man

Alternate translation: [hitting a Hebrew] or [beating a Hebrew]

Exodus 2:12

And he turned this way and that way

These two opposite directions have the combined meaning of “everywhere.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [He looked all around] (See: **Merism (p.1397)**)

and he struck

The context makes clear that Moses struck the Egyptian hard enough or repeatedly until Moses killed him. Consider using a word that indicates a deadly blow. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 1285)**)

Exodus 2:13

And he went out

See how you translated this in Exodus 2:11. (See: **Go and Come (p.1362)**)

second

The ordinal number here could mean “the next day” (UST) or simply on some day following the events of the previous verse. (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1414)**)

and behold

Here, **behold** shows that Moses was surprised by what he saw. You can use a word in your language that will give this meaning. (See: **Exclamations (p.1347)**)

to the guilty one

Based on Moses’ question, this means the aggressor or the man wrongfully attacking his neighbor. Alternate translation: [the man who was guilty of starting the fight]

Exodus 2:14

Who set you as the ruler man and judge over us

The man is not asking a question, he is using this question to rebuke Moses for intervening in the fight. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [You are not our leader and have no right to judge us!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1445)**)

Are you saying to kill me like you killed the Egyptian

The man used a question here to be sarcastic. Alternate translation: [We know that you killed an Egyptian yesterday. You had better not kill me!] (See: **Irony (p.1388)**)

Are you saying to kill me like you killed the Egyptian

Again, the man asks a question that is intended to make a statement. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [Do you think you could kill me without anyone finding out? We know what you did to the Egyptian] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1445)**)

Are you saying to kill me

Alternate translation: [Are you planning to kill me] or [Are you threatening to kill me]

and said

Certainly the thing is known was likely something Moses said to himself, that is, he thought it to himself rather than speaking to the men in front of him. If this would be confusing in your language, you might introduce it as a thought. Alternate translation: [and thought] (See: **Aside (p.1283)**)

and said, “Certainly the thing is known

It may be clearer to present what was likely a thought Moses had as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation (as indirect quotation): [because he thought that everyone knew what he had done] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1333)**)

Exodus 2:15

and he sought to kill Moses

Pharaoh most likely delegated this task. Alternate translation: [and he sought to have Moses killed] (note that the passive form will not work in every language)

from the face of

His **face** means his presence. Alternate translation: [from] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

And he dwelt & and he sat down

In Hebrew, these are the same verb. In English, they could be translated as “settle,” which can mean to dwell in a certain place, but it can also mean to lower one’s body into a seated position. This could mean: (1) Moses lived in Midian. He sat by this well one day. This may have been the well for the town he lived in. (2) Moses lived in Midian. His home was by this well. (3) Moses was a wanderer. He was in Midian and sat by this well when the next event occurred.

Exodus 2:16

And the priest of Midian had seven daughters

This sentence is background information. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.1289)**)

And the priest of Midian had seven daughters

This sentence marks a scene transition. However, the last clause of the previous verse (“and he sat down by a well”) seems to be related to this new scene, so you may want to make your transition before that, as is done in the UST. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

daughters

The **daughters** are new participants. Use the natural form in your language for introducing new characters. (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1385)**)

And they came

The perspective of the narrative is set at the well. The daughters came from elsewhere to the well. They were probably on foot. Here each language will need to choose the appropriate motion word. (See: **Go and Come (p. 1362)**)

seven

7 (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

and drew

This means that they brought up water from a well.

the troughs

The **troughs** were long, narrow, open containers for animals to eat or drink out of. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p. 1460)**)

Exodus 2:17

And & came

A group of **men came**. They may not have been far away before coming and driving the women away. Use an appropriate form of moving verb. (See: **Go and Come (p.1362)**)

the men who were shepherding

These are new characters only seen briefly. (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1385)**)

but & arose

Use an expression that communicates that what Moses did was unexpected. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1313)**)

Exodus 2:18

And they came

The daughters came from the well to their father, probably on foot. You can use either come or go, whichever is more natural. (See: **Go and Come (p.1362)**)

Reuel

Reuel, a name or perhaps a title, is used of the man only here and in Numbers 10:29. He is otherwise called "Jethro." (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

Reuel

The priest of Midian was mentioned in v. 16 in a background statement but is a new character starting here. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new character. (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1385)**)

and he said, "Why have you hurried coming today

If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: [and he asked how they were able to return so quickly that day] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1333)**)

coming

Alternate translation: [in returning] (See: **Go and Come (p.1362)**)

Exodus 2:19

An Egyptian man

Jethro's daughters assume Moses was Egyptian. When you translate it, you should be clear that this refers to Moses.

from the hand of

Here, **hand** refers to the power, control, or actions of the shepherds. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [from the strength of] or [from the harm of] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

he & drew especially

This expresses surprise or emphasizes the magnitude of Moses' act of kindness to the women. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language. (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Exodus 2:20

And where is he? What is this? You left the man

These questions are a mild rebuke to the daughters for not inviting Moses into their home according to the normal hospitality of that culture. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [You should not have left this man at the well!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1445)**)

him

Here, **him** refers to Moses. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

bread

Here, **bread** is used to refer to food in general. If this would be misunderstood in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or plain language. Alternate translation: [food] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1456)**)

Exodus 2:21

And Moses was willing to dwell with the man

Alternate translation: [Moses agreed to live with Reuel]

Zipporah

Zipporah is Reuel's (Jethro's) daughter. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

Exodus 2:22

I have become a foreigner in a foreign land

Only this portion is a quotation. As a possibility for clarity, the UST includes both speech events as one quotation. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with first-level quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1436)**)

Gershom

His name, **Gershom**, sounds somewhat like the Hebrew for “a stranger here.” You may consider using a footnote to explain that. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

I have become a foreigner in a foreign land

Alternate translation: [stranger in a foreign land]

Exodus 2:23

And it happened in these many days that the king of Egypt died

This introduces a new section and series of events. A large amount of time went by. According to Stephen's sermon in Acts 7:30, Moses was in Midian 40 years. Alternate translation: [This is what happened during the many days Moses was in Midian. The king of Egypt died.] (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

Verses 23–25 give a summary of what happened in Egypt and with the Israelites and God while Moses was in exile. These verses give background information to set the scene. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.1289)**)

And & groaned

They **groaned** because of their sorrow and misery. Alternate translation: [sighed deeply]

and their plea ascended to God

The **plea** of the Israelites are spoken of as if they were a person and were able to travel up to where God is. If this might be confusing for your readers, you could express this meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and God heard their pleading] (See: **Personification (p.1420)**)

Exodus 2:24

and God remembered

This a common biblical way of saying that God thought about what He had promised. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language. Alternate translation: [and God recalled] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Exodus 2:25

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 3

Exodus 3 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

This chapter is one conversation in which Yahweh begins to commission and send Moses to rescue the Israelites.

This chapter records one of the most important events in the history of the Israelite people: the revelation of the name Yahweh at the burning bush.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

God's holiness

God is so holy that people can not look upon him without dying. This is why Moses covered his eyes. It is also why he took off his shoes. (See: [[rc:*///tw/dict/bible/kt/holy]] and [[rc:*///ta/man/translate/figs-explicit]])

Yahweh

The name Yahweh is the personal name of God, which he revealed to Moses. Yahweh is probably related to the phrase "I am" which he tells Moses in verse 14. Some translations use all capitals to set this apart: "I AM." Great care must be taken in translating the phrase "I am that I am." (See: **Yahweh (p.1490)**)

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Participants

"The angel of Yahweh," "Yahweh," and "God" all appear to be speaking to Moses and interacting with him from the burning bush. Furthermore, God says that his name is "I AM." (See note above on Yahweh and I AM.) Yahweh and God are the same, while there is speculation about who the angel of Yahweh is.

Exodus 3:1

And Moses was shepherding

This phrase brings the story focus back to Midian and Moses. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

Verse 1 provides immediate background context, setting the scene for Moses' interaction with Yahweh. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.1289)**)

the priest of Midian

This is a possessive of social relationship. **Jethro** is a **priest** who serves the Midianites. (See: **Possession (p.1425)**)

and he came to

Alternate translation: [and he arrived at] (See: **Go and Come (p.1362)**)

the mountain of God

This is an associative possessive. This mountain was associated with God in some way. In Exodus 3:12 God tells Moses that he and the Israelites will serve him on this mountain. Later in the story, this promise is fulfilled, and it is where God makes his covenant with Israel and gives them the 10 Commandments. So it may have been called **the mountain of God** in retrospect (as Moses probably wrote this book sometime after the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness). However, it is possible that the mountain was already somehow associated with God's presence or worship before Moses went there with the flock. (See: **Possession (p.1425)**)

Exodus 3:2

And the angel of Yahweh appeared to him in a flame of fire from the middle of a bush

This is a summary of what happened. The next few verses tell the story of how this happened and how Moses discovered what was happening.

and behold, the bush was burning in the fire, but the bush was not being consumed

The word **behold** here shows that Moses saw something that was very different from what he expected. He expected the bush to be burnt up completely by the fire. Consider using an interjection in your language that expresses that what follows is a surprise. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1313)**)

being consumed

Here, **being consumed** means being eaten completely until gone. In the case of fire, this is a metonym for burning completely until gone. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [destroyed by the fire] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 3:3

Let me turn aside and see this great sight! Why does the bush not burn up

This is a direct quote. It's not specified who Moses spoke to; he may have been alone or with a group of shepherds or his family. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with first-level quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation. There may be other quotations in this chapter; they will be marked by the same punctuation, but they will not have their own notes unless there is something unique about them. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1436)**)

great sight

If your language does not use an abstract noun for something strange that someone sees, you can express the idea behind the abstract noun **sight** in another way. Alternate translation: [unusual thing that I see] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

Exodus 3:4

Yahweh & God

These terms both refer to the same being, since God's name is Yahweh.

Exodus 3:5

for the place on which you are standing, it is holy ground

This is the reason Moses must stop coming close to the burning bush and take off his sandals. If it would be more natural in your language, you could put the reason before the commands, as in, “The place on which you are standing, it is holy ground, so you must not come close to here. Take your sandals off from on your feet.” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1320)**)

Exodus 3:6

I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob

All of these men worshiped the same God. Alternate translation: [the God of your father, of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob]

I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob

This a direct quotation. The UST continues the quotation from verse 5 rather than including an additional “he said.” This may be more natural in some languages. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate the direct quotation with first-level quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1436)**)

your father

This could mean (1) “your father,” if it means “your father,” then it refers to Moses’ own father (2) “your ancestor,” if it means “your ancestor,” then the phrases following it clarify who “your father” refers to: it refers to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In most cases, it will be best to translate it as “your father,” i.e. Amram, Moses’ father.

And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid from staring toward God

Reason: **for he was afraid from staring toward God** Result: **And Moses hid his face** 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. (See also: Exodus 33:20) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1320)**)

Exodus 3:7

And Yahweh said

After this phrase, a direct quote begins that continues through the end of 3:10. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with an opening first-level quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the beginning of a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1436)**)

I have certainly seen

The Hebrew practice of verb repetition for intensification cannot be directly translated into English. Here, “see” is repeated in Hebrew. This expresses the intensity, certainty, or clarity of Yahweh’s having **seen** how his people were suffering. Use a natural form of strengthening a verb from your language. (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

the affliction of my people

There are two possessives here: (1) “affliction of … people”: This is an event-related possessive where the people are the objects of affliction. They are treated badly as slaves. (2) “my people”: This one is more difficult as it involves both ownership and the possessive of social relationship. God views his people as his possession, and he is also in relationship with them as their God because they are descended from Abraham, though at this time they may not know God as theirs. (See: **Possession (p.1425)**)

the affliction of my people who are in Egypt

If your language does not use an abstract noun for this idea, you can express the idea behind the abstract noun **affliction** in another way. Alternate translation: [how my people who are in Egypt are afflicted] or [how the Egyptians afflict my people] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

from the faces of those who oppress him

Here, **faces** refers to the whole person or the presence of the person(s) who were oppressing the Israelites. If this image is used in your language, you may translate it. If a similar image is used, you may consider using it. If neither is the case, you may omit the word “face” and translate the meaning. (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

those who oppress him

Alternate translation: [his oppressors]

surely

Here, **surely** is intensifying the expression of Yahweh’s knowledge. Your translation should express Yahweh’s knowing with certainty or strength.

those who oppress him. & his anguish

These pronouns, **him** and **his**, refer to the Israelites as a group in the singular. They agree with “people” as a collective noun in 3:6. Some languages may have to use plural pronouns. Others may have to match the pronoun’s gender to the grammatical gender of the word for “people” in their language. If necessary, change “him” to “them” or change “his” to “hers” or “its” (depending on grammatical gender of “people.”) Alternate translation: [those who oppress them … their anguish] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1304)**)

his anguish

This is an event-related possessive where the people (as a group: **his**) are the subjects of **anguish.** Your translation should express that they are deeply distressed. (See: **Possession (p.1425)**)

his anguish

It is implied that they are deeply distressed because they are treated badly as slaves. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [his anguish from his slavery] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

his anguish

If your language does not use an abstract noun for this idea, you can express the idea behind the abstract noun **anguish** in another way. Alternate translation: [how distressed they are] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

Exodus 3:8

Verse 8 contains God's intended result from his acts of seeing and hearing, expressed in both verses 7 and 9. You may need to expressly mark this, for instance by introducing verse 8 with something like "Therefore," and verse 9 with something like "Again, because." (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1320)**)

And I have come down

God is expressing that he is descending from heaven to earth to intervene. God is always everywhere, but this phrase means that his special attention will be directed to this situation. Use whatever form of come or go is appropriate in your language for this. (See: **Go and Come (p.1362)**)

to deliver him & and to bring him up

Here, **him** refers in the singular to the Israelites as a group. It is agreeing with "people" as a collective noun in 3:6. Some languages may have to use plural pronouns. Others may have to match the pronoun's gender to the grammatical gender of the word for "people" in their language. See what you did in the previous verse. (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1304)**)

from the hand of

Someone's **hand** is a common Biblical metaphor for power and control. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

from the hand of the Egyptians

This is a possessive where the Egyptians are the subject of **the hand**, which means power. The Egyptians used their power and control to oppress the Israelites. Use a phrase in your language that expresses the idea of a group of people having power. (See: **Possession (p.1425)**)

to a good and wide land, to a land flowing with milk and honey

There are multiple levels of parallelism here. First, the statements, **to a good and wide land** and **to a land flowing with milk and honey** are in parallel with each other. Within each of those, **good** and **wide** are in parallel with each other, and **milk** and **honey** are in parallel with each other. Each of these levels is meant to reinforce and expand upon one another. These are not examples of synonymous parallelism, and each part of the statement should be translated. (See: **Parallelism (p.1417)**)

milk and honey

Here, **milk** is a metonym for domestic animals and the food products obtained from them; **honey** is a metonym for the food obtained from growing plants. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. The next note explains further. (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

a land flowing with milk and honey

God spoke of the land being good for animals and plants as if the milk and honey from those animals and plants were flowing through the land. If this metaphor makes sense in your language, you may translate it. If your

language has metaphors that mean a land is good for producing healthy livestock and good crops, you may consider using those. If neither is the case, you may translate the meaning. See UST. (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

flowing with

Alternate translation: [full of] or [with an abundance of]

milk

Since milk comes from cows and goats, this represents food produced by livestock. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [food from livestock] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

and honey

Since honey is produced from flowers, this represents food from crops. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [food from crops] (See: **Metonymy (p. 1405)**)

Exodus 3:9

This verse parallels 3:7. Yahweh is restating that the Israelite's plight has gotten his attention. This creates emphasis and connection to what Yahweh will do with what Moses will do as Yahweh's appointed leader. If this repetition would confuse your readers consider a paragraph break at the start of this verse to separate the two parallel statements or use some other strategy of emphasis and connection that is natural in your language. (See: **Parallelism (p.1417)**)

behold

This is a term meant to focus the attention of the listener on what the speaker is about to say. If there is not a good way to translate this term in your language, this term can be omitted from the translation, or you can use an alternate translation like "certainly." (See: **Exclamations (p.1347)**)

the cry of the sons of Israel has come to me

Here, **the cry** is spoken of as if it were a person who is capable of moving on his own. If this might be confusing for your readers, you could express this meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [I have heard the cries of the people of Israel] (See: **Personification (p.1420)**)

I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians are oppressing them

If your language does not use an abstract noun for this idea, you can express the idea behind the abstract noun **oppression** in another way. Alternate translation: [I have seen how the Egyptians are oppressing them] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

Exodus 3:10

And now

And now functions as a discourse marker expressing logical conclusion. “So then,” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1320)**)

Exodus 3:11

Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring out the sons of Israel from Egypt

Moses uses this question to tell God that he, Moses, is not the right person for the task. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1445)**)

Exodus 3:12

you all will serve

If your language uses different forms of “you” depending on the number of people addressed, use a plural form here. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

Exodus 3:13

Behold, I am about to go to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you.’ And they will say to me, ‘What is his name

Moses presents God with a hypothetical situation here. The three events (**go ... say to them ... say to me**) are part of one hypothetical event. You should translate this in a way that makes it clear that this is a future, not-yet-real event. (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1318)**)

Behold

Behold is a term meant to focus the attention of the listener on what the speaker is about to say. In this case, Moses uses it to introduce what he views as a probable future occurrence. Alternate translation: [Now]

am about to go

In your language, use **go** or “come” as makes most sense for Moses’ hypothetical action of going from the mountain to where the Israelites are. (See: **Go and Come (p.1362)**)

The God of your fathers has sent me to you

This is a second-level quotation. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this by marking it with second-level quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation inside a quotation. However, you may also choose to translate it as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: [that the God of their fathers has sent me to them] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1439)**)

The God of your fathers

Here, **fathers** means “ancestors.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [The God of your ancestors] or [The God whom your ancestors worshiped] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

what should I say to them

Moses is asking God what he should do as a result of the hypothetical situation he presented (see earlier note). Use a natural form in your language for introducing a situation that could happen. Alternate translation: [If that happens, what should I say to them] (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1318)**)

Exodus 3:14

I AM WHO I AM

This is God's response to Moses' question about God's name. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: [God said to Moses, "Tell them that God says his name is 'I AM WHO I AM.'"]

I AM WHO I AM

This could mean: (1) this whole sentence is God's name or (2) God is not telling his name but something about himself. By saying this, God is teaching that he is eternal; he has always lived and always will live.

I AM & I AM." & I AM

Languages that do not have an equivalent to the verb "am" may need to render this as "I LIVE" or "I EXIST."

And he said

This indicates that God is still speaking. It may make more sense to omit this in some languages.

I AM sent me to you

This is a second-level quotation. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this by marking it with second-level quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation inside a quotation. However, you may also choose to translate it as an indirect quotation, as in the UST. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1439)**)

Exodus 3:15

And God also said to Moses

As God is still speaking, it may make more sense to omit this in some languages.

to Moses

After this phrase, a direct quotation begins that continues until the end of chapter 3 at verse 22. This section contains four levels of quotations as God tells Moses to tell the Israelite elders a specific message from God. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with an opening first-level quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the beginning of a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p. 1436)**)

Yahweh, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, sent me to you. This is my name forever, and this is my memorial from generation to generation

This is a second-level quotation. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with an opening second-level quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the beginning of a quotation within a quotation. It may be possible to translate it as an indirect quotation, but you will need to be careful to correctly change the pronoun persons. Alternate translation: [You must tell the Israelites that Yahweh, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, sent you to them. This is his name forever, and this is his memorial from generation to generation.] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1439)**)

the God of your fathers

Here, **fathers** means “ancestors.” Alternate translation: [the God of your ancestors] or [the God whom your ancestors worshiped] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

from generation to generation

The repetition of **generation** is indicating “to each and every generation” which means “for all people at all times.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. (See: **Merism (p. 1397)**)

Exodus 3:16

the God of your fathers

Here, **fathers** means “ancestors.” Alternate translation: [the God of your ancestors] or [the God whom your ancestors worshiped] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were three of the Israelites’ ancestors. They all worshiped the same God.

I have certainly attended

This begins a third-level quotation that continues until the end of 3:17. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with an opening third-level quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the beginning of a quotation within a quotation that is within a quotation. The closing marks for both the second-level and third-level quotations should not occur until the end of verse 17. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1436)**)

I have certainly attended

The word translated **attended** often means God is coming to take action. Translate this phrase in a way that communicates God’s focused, caring observation. (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

I have certainly attended

Here, **attended** is repeated in Hebrew. The Hebrew practice of verb repetition for intensification cannot be directly translated into English. This expresses the intensity, certainty, or clarity of Yahweh’s having **attended to** how his people were suffering. Use a natural form of strengthening a verb from your language. (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

to you

The word **you** refers to the people of Israel. If your language uses different forms of “you” depending on the number of people addressed, use a plural form here. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

what is being done

The focus of this passive is the mistreatment being **done to** the Israelites, not on who is doing it. In fact, **in Egypt** further dissociates the actors from this sentence. 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, as in the UST. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

in Egypt

The phrase **in Egypt** is a metonym for the Egyptian oppressors. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [by the Egyptians] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Yahweh

This begins a second-level quotation that continues until the end of 3:17. It contains a third-level quotation that begins at “I have certainly” and also continues to the end of verse 17. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with an opening second-level quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the beginning of a quotation within a quotation. The closing marks for both the second and third-level quotations should not occur until the end of verse 17. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1436)**)

Exodus 3:17

If you are using direct quotations, at the end of this verse you should have three closing markers. In English, it looks like ’ ” ’ (without spaces). (See: **Quote Markings (p.1436)**)

I will bring you up from affliction in Egypt to the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey

This is a fourth-level quotation. It should be marked in some manner that distinguishes it from the outer three levels. Alternatively, it can be translated as an indirect quotation, as in the UST. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p. 1439)**)

I will bring & up

Regardless of the geographic realities, to **bring up** does not primarily have a literal meaning. Rather, it means to bring the Israelites into a better situation. God promised to bring them up from their low status as slaves to a place where they would be the masters of a good land. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language. (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

from affliction

See how you translated **affliction** in 3:7. Alternate translation: [from being afflicted] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p. 1278)**)

milk and honey

Here, **milk** is a metonym for domestic animals and the food products obtained from them; **honey** is a metonym for the food obtained from growing plants. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. The next note explains further. (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

a land flowing with milk and honey

God spoke of the land being good for animals and plants as if the milk and honey from those animals and plants were flowing through the land. See how you translated this in Exodus 3:8. Alternate translation: [a land that is excellent for raising livestock and growing crops] or [a land where milk and honey flow] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

flowing with

Alternate translation: [full of] or [with an abundance of]

milk

Since milk comes from cows and goats, this represents food produced by livestock. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [food from livestock] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

and honey

Since honey is produced from flowers, this represents food from crops. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [food from crops] (See: **Metonymy (p. 1405)**)

Exodus 3:18

And they will listen to your voice

Listen often means “hear and do/obey.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language. Alternate translation: [And they will pay attention to your voice] (See: **Idiom (p. 1378)**)

to your voice. & you

Here, **your** and **you** refers to Moses. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

to your voice

This phrase means the elders will listen to the message Moses brings from God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [to your message] or [to my message which you tell them] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1456)**)

and the elders of Israel

This is a possessive of social relationship. Alternate translation: [elders in charge of the Israelites] (See: **Possession (p.1425)**)

Israel

Israel is a collective noun that refers to all the Israelites. If your language does not use singular nouns in that way, you can use a different expression. Alternate translation: [the Israelites] or [the Israelite people] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1304)**)

Egypt

Here, **Egypt** refers to the Egyptian nation. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [the Egyptians] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

and you all will say

If your language uses different forms of “you” depending on the number of people addressed, use a plural form here. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

with us. & let us go & and let us sacrifice

These instances of **us** are exclusive; they include Moses, the elders, and all the Israelites, but exclude the king of Egypt. Your language may require you to mark these forms. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.1349)**)

three

Alternate translation: [3] (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

Exodus 3:19

and not with a strong hand

The word **hand** is a metonym for the power of the owner of the hand. There are two further difficulties: (1) Whose hand (power) is being referred to, (2) does the negative mean “not unless” or “not even?” Possible meanings include: (1) “only if he sees that he has no power to do anything else,” where the **hand** belongs to Pharaoh (2) “only if I force him to let you go,” where the **hand** belongs to Yahweh, taking “not unless” for the negative (3) “not even if I force him to let you go,” where the **hand** belongs to Yahweh, taking “not even” for the negative (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 3:20

And I shall send out

God says this will be a result of the king of Egypt's stubbornness. Alternate translation: [Therefore, I will send out] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1320)**)

And I shall send out my hand

Here, **hand** refers to God's power. Alternate translation: [I will use my strength] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Egypt

Egypt refers to both the land and the people group, and then, by extension, to Pharaoh as well. (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Egypt & within him

Here, **him** refers to Egypt as a collective.

my wonders

If your language does not use an abstract noun for this idea, you can express the idea behind the abstract noun **wonders** in another way. Alternate translation: [my amazing acts] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

And after that

Here the sequential nature of these happenings is emphasized. Consider using a stronger sequential connective term than usual here. (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1323)**)

he will send

Here, **he** refers to the Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

you out

Here, **you** refers to the Israelites. If your language uses different forms of "you" depending on the number of people addressed, use a plural form here. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

Exodus 3:21

favor in the eyes of the Egyptians

In the eyes of the Egyptians is an idiom for the Egyptian's feelings. **Favor** means those feelings are positive. Taken together, this means that when the Egyptians see the Israelites (Hebrews) leaving Egypt, they will gladly help them (because they want them to leave so badly due to the Egyptians suffering under God's judgment). If your language has the same or a similar idiom, you can translate or use it. Otherwise, you can translate the meaning. (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

in the eyes of the Egyptians

This is a part-whole possessive. Also, if your language uses a specific form of the possessive for things one cannot lose, it would be appropriate to use that form here. (See: **Possession (p.1425)**)

this people

Alternate translation: [you]

when you go, you will & go

If your language uses different forms of "you" depending on the number of people addressed, use a plural form here. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

when you go, you will & go

Alternate translation: [leave] or [go out] or [come out] (See: **Go and Come (p.1362)**)

not & emptily

The double negative, **not ... emptily** is used to mean "full." If this double negative would be misunderstood in your language, you could translate it as a positive statement. Alternate translation: [go with many things] (See: **Double Negatives (p.1335)**)

you will not go emptily

Here Yahweh uses a figure of speech that expresses a strong positive meaning by using a negative word together with a word that is the opposite of the intended meaning. If this is confusing in your language, you can express the meaning positively. Alternate translation: [you will go with your hands full of good things] or [you will go with many valuable things] (See: **Litotes (p.1395)**)

Exodus 3:22

and from one sojourning in her house

The word, **sojourning** means living somewhere other than one's native land, usually temporarily. It is unclear both who the sojourning (visiting) women are and in whose house they are sojourning, leaving several possibilities. Most translations which make a decision about who they are identify both the temporary resident and her host home as Egyptian. This makes sense as the Israelites will be plundering the Egyptians. If it is possible to leave this ambiguous in your translation, that would be best.

And you will put them on your sons and on your daughters, and you will plunder

Each of these is a plural **you.** If your language uses different forms of "you" depending on the number of people addressed, use a plural form here. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

the Egyptians

After this phrase, the direct quote of Yahweh's word which started in 3:15 ends. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with a closing first-level quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the end of a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1436)**)

Exodus 4

Exodus 4 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

- v. 1–17: Moses hesitates to obey so Yahweh gives Moses signs to prove his commission
- v. 18–28: Moses goes back to Egypt
- v. 29–31: Moses and Aaron meet with the Israelite leaders and tell them what Yahweh said

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Quotations

- There is a difficult transition between 4:4 and 4:5 because the quotation stops in the middle to inject a bit of narrative. When it resumes in 4:5, the sentence seems incomplete (even if merged directly with the quotation fragment in 4:4). (See: [[rc:*///ta/man/translate/figs-ellipsis]])* Yahweh's instructions to Moses are complex, and there are up to four levels of quotations in this chapter. Translators will need to decide if some of these need to become indirect quotations (if that is possible in their language) and take great care to use the proper quotation markings in the proper locations.

Order of events

- The order of events is not always clear. In 4:14 Yahweh tells Moses that Aaron is coming to meet him, but Yahweh telling Aaron to go meet Moses in the wilderness is not recorded until 4:27.
- The timing of the events in 4:18–27, especially verses 18–19 and 27 in relation to the rest of the events of the chapter, is unclear.

Thus says Yahweh

The first of over 400 occurrences throughout the Old Testament of a standard phrase used to introduce direct, authoritative instruction from Yahweh occurs in 4:22. It occurs ten times in the book of Exodus; nine of these are between chapters 4–11. It would be good for your team to have a standard way to translate this that makes it clear that the words that come next are directly from God. If your language has a standard way of introducing a new message from your leader that alerts the hearers that these are the words of the leader, that would be a good phrase to consider.

Yahweh's attempt to kill someone

The encounter recorded from 4:24 to 4:26 is one of the strangest and most difficult passages in the entire book. Difficulties include:

- To whom do the pronouns refer? Masculine pronouns are used throughout the section, but there are two possible antecedents, Moses (who is not named in the narrative) and Zipporah's son (who was presumably also Moses' son, but this is how he is referred to in this text. For why, see below on why Yahweh did this). Most commentators believe the pronouns refer to Moses.
- Circumcision is described in fairly graphic detail. Different cultures will need to approach this differently. Some may have terms for circumcision, while others may be comfortable translating mostly literally, and others will need to use euphemisms or other strategies to translate. (See: **circumcise, circumcised, circumcision, uncircumcised, uncircumcision (p.1471)**)

- The meaning of the phrase **a bridegroom of blood** (ULT) is unknown.
- Why did Yahweh attack Moses? Many commentators conclude that Moses had neglected to circumcise one of his sons because it displeased Zipporah, and Yahweh was holding Moses responsible before he returned to lead the Israelites (who should have been circumcised). When Zipporah repented by circumcising the son herself and touching the foreskin to Moses' feet, Yahweh relents. These conclusions should help inform translation but should not be made explicit in the text.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Children of God

This chapter introduces the concept that Israel, the people group, is the chosen people of God and God's firstborn son. (See: [[rc:*///tw/dict/bible/kt/elect]] and [[rc:*///tw/dict/bible/kt/peopleofgod]] and **firstborn (p.1475)**)

Yahweh hardened Pharaoh's heart

Scholars are divided over how to understand this statement. There is debate over how Pharaoh has an active or passive role in the hardening of his own heart. Translators should simply follow the text. In Exodus 4–14 there are ten statements that Yahweh hardens Pharaoh's heart, and ten statements that Pharaoh hardens his own heart. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 4:1

And Moses answered and said

Here, **answered and said** is a Hebrew expression which does not convey any extra information. Unless your language naturally uses a similar structure, it is better to translate one verb and omit the other. Alternate translation: [Moses answered]

But look, they will not believe me, and they will not listen to my voice; for they will say, ‘Yahweh has not appeared to you

This is a direct quotation. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this by marking it with first-level quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation.There may be other quotations in this chapter; they will be marked by the same punctuation, but they will not have their own notes unless there is something unique about them. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1436)**)

to my voice

See 3:18. Alternate translation: [to what I say] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Yahweh has not appeared to you

This is a second-level quotation. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this by marking it with second-level quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation within a quotation. However, you could translate it as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: [that Yahweh has not appeared to me] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1439)**)

But look

This is a term meant to focus the attention of the listener on what the speaker is about to say. If there is not a good way to translate this term in your language, this term can be omitted from the translation, or you can use an alternate translation like “Listen to me.”

Exodus 4:2

to him, “& And he said

Here, **him** and **he** refer to Moses. Alternate translation: [to Moses ... And Moses said] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

Exodus 4:3

from its face

Here, “face” represents the snake itself. Alternate translation: [from the snake] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 4:4

and take it by its tail

Alternate translation: [and pick it up by the tail] or [and grasp it by the tail]

Reach out your hand and take it by its tail

This direct quotation is interrupted by Moses obeying Yahweh. This is probably a tightly ordered sequence of events where Yahweh paused and then continued speaking immediately after Moses obeyed. The quote resumes in 4:5, and there is more discussion there about how to translate the quotation resumption. (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1323)**)

and it became a staff

Alternate translation: [and it turned into a rod] or [and it changed into a staff]

Exodus 4:5

in order to cause them to believe that Yahweh appeared to you, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob

This continues the direct quotation from the first part of 4:4. It may be more natural to reorganize verses four and five to keep the quote together. If you rearrange like this, Moses picking up the snake/staff should come after the full quotation. However, it is better to do something similar to the UST, which restates that Yahweh is speaking and provides some implied directives from Yahweh to make a complete sentence. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1436)**)

in order to cause them to believe that Yahweh appeared to you, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob

This quote is not a complete sentence; the UST provides a clarification. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. (See: **Ellipsis (p.1340)**)

cause them to believe & their fathers

Here, **them** and **their** refer either to the Israelites or to the Israelite elders. God had instructed Moses to gather and speak to the elders; if you make this participant explicit, elders is a better option. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

to you

Here, **you** refers to Moses. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were three of their ancestors. They all worshiped the same God.

Exodus 4:6

and behold

This word, **behold**, is used to create an exclamation, showing surprise. (See: **Exclamations (p.1347)**)

like snow

The word **like** (ULT) or “as” (UST) here is used to compare how Moses’ hand looked. You may not have a word for snow in your language. If so, consider an alternative that describes something very white. You may need to make the whiteness explicit. Alternate translation: [that made it look white like wool] or [that made it look white like the sand on the beach] (See: **Simile (p.1449)**)

Exodus 4:7

and behold

This word is used to create an exclamation, showing surprise. (See: **Exclamations (p.1347)**)

Exodus 4:8

and they do not listen to the voice of the first sign, then they will believe the voice of the following sign

Here each **sign** is spoken of as if it had a **voice** with which it could speak. If this might be confusing for your readers, you could express this meaning plainly that makes explicit that the signs are meant to be proof that God sent Moses. Alternate translation: [and are not convinced that God has appeared to you by seeing the first sign, then they will be convinced by seeing the second sign.] (See: **Personification (p.1420)**)

they do & believe & they do & listen & then they will believe

Here, **they** refers either to the Israelites or to the Israelite elders. God had instructed Moses to gather and speak to the elders; if you make this participant explicit, elders is the better option, but be sure to do the same as you did in 4:5. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

they do not believe & then they will believe

Alternate translation: [they do not acknowledge ... then they will acknowledge] or [they do not accept ... then they will accept]

Exodus 4:9

they do & believe & they do & listen

Here, **they** refers either to the Israelites or to the Israelite elders. God had instructed Moses to gather and speak to the elders; if you make this participant explicit, elders is the better option, but be sure to do the same as you did in 4:5. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

to your voice

See 3:18. Alternate translation: [to what you say] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 4:10

Oh

This word is used by a speaker to beg a superior to allow him to speak. Alternate translation: [Please]

I am not a man of words; not since yesterday, nor since three days ago

Alternate translation: [I have never been an excellent speaker, not now, not before]

a man of words

This expression means “a man who uses words well,” in other words, an eloquent man who can speak well and convincingly.

not since yesterday, nor since three days ago

These phrases simply mean “in the past.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. (See: **Merism (p.1397)**)

your servant

Moses refers to himself as God’s servant to lower his status before God (and perhaps by doing so to make his argument of inability stronger). If this is confusing in your language, you can make who he means plain. Alternate translation: [me, your servant] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1351)**)

heavy of mouth and heavy of tongue

These phrases mean basically the same thing. Moses uses them to emphasize that he is not a good speaker. If your language does not use repetition in this way, you can combine these phrases. Alternate translation: [not good at public speaking] (See: **Doublet (p.1338)**)

tongue

Here, **tongue** refers to Moses’ ability to speak. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [speech] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 4:11

Who put a mouth in mankind

Yahweh uses this question to emphasize that he is the Creator who makes it possible for people to speak. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [Is it not I, Yahweh, who created the human mouth and the ability to speak] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1445)**)

who makes a mute or a deaf or a seeing or a blind

Yahweh uses this question to emphasize that he is the one who decides if people can speak and hear, and if they can see. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [make people able to speak or hear or to see or to be blind] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1445)**)

Is it not I, Yahweh

Yahweh uses this question to emphasize that he alone makes these decisions. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [I, Yahweh, am the one who does this!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1445)**)

Exodus 4:12

And I shall be with your mouth

Here, **mouth** refers to Moses' ability to speak. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [I will give you the ability to speak] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 4:13

Oh

This word is used by a speaker to beg a superior to allow him to speak. See what you did in 4:10. Alternate translation: [Please]

please send by a hand you send

In translating this phrase, it is important to make clear that Moses is asking Yahweh to send someone else. Here he is not accepting Yahweh's commission.

by a hand

This phrase means "by a person." The figure is of a person taking Yahweh's message in his hand to the Israelites and Pharaoh. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the meaning plainly. (See: **Synecdoche (p. 1456)**)

Exodus 4:14

And the nose of Yahweh burned

This means that Yahweh is angry. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: [Yahweh became angry] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

and he said

Here, **he** refers to Yahweh. Alternate translation: [and Yahweh said] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p. 1431)**)

Is not Aaron, the Levite, your brother

Yahweh uses this rhetorical question to suggest an alternative to Moses. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [I know you have a brother, Aaron the Levite.] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1445)**)

your brother

Aaron is older than Moses. If your language uses a different term for the sibling relationship based on gender and age order, choose the appropriate one. (See: **Kinship (p.1391)**)

can speak well

In Hebrew, the word **speak** is repeated. This means he speaks well. English cannot convey this by doubling, so the meaning of the repetition was translated in the ULT in this case. If your language can say something like “speaking speaks” to mean “speaks well,” consider it; otherwise, translate the meaning similarly to the ULT or UST. (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

behold

Here, **behold** is used to draw attention to surprising information that follows. If your language has a term that functions in that way (“Listen!” or “Look!” or “Pay Attention!”), use it here.

is coming

Yahweh says Aaron is coming from Egypt to Midian to find Moses. He is probably on foot. Depending on the language, the required form of go or come may vary. (See: **Go and Come (p.1362)**)

and he will be glad

Aaron will be glad because he sees Moses. Consider a conjunction or other form that expresses result. Alternate translation: [and because he sees you, he will have joy] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p. 1320)**)

in his heart

Here, **heart** refers to inner thoughts and emotions. If the heart is not a body part your culture uses to refer to a person's thoughts and emotions, consider using whichever organ your culture would use for this image. (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 4:15

the words

Words here are spoken of as if they were something that can be physically placed in a person's mouth. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the message that he is to repeat] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

And I am with your mouth and with his mouth

The word **mouth** here represents Moses' and Aaron's choice of words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [And I will be with you as you speak and with him as he speaks] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

you both & you should do

These refer to Moses and Aaron. If your language uses different forms of "you" depending on the number of people addressed, use a dual form if you have one or, if not, use a plural. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural (p. 1354)**)

Exodus 4:16

like a mouth

This phrase compares Aaron to a mouth because he will be the one to actually vocalize to the Israelites and Pharaoh what Moses tells him to say. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent comparison or express this meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the one to say what you tell him to say] (See: **Simile (p.1449)**)

will be like God to him

The word **like** here means Moses would represent the same authority to Aaron as God did to Moses. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent comparison or express this meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [you will speak to Aaron with the same authority with which I speak to you] (See: **Simile (p.1449)**)

Exodus 4:17

And & this staff

Yahweh assumes that Moses will know that by **this staff**, he means the one that Moses said he had in his hand in 4:2 and with which God told him to do a miracle in 4:3–4. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 4:18

Jethro

Jethro is reintroduced as a participant in the narrative here. Use the natural form in your language for reintroducing a character. (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1385)**)

And & went

Because the setting has shifted back to Jethro's home, some languages may need to use "come" here. (See: **Go and Come (p.1362)**)

his father-in-law

This refers to the father of Moses' wife. If your language uses a different term for the husband's or wife's father use the one for wife's father. (See: **Kinship (p.1391)**)

and he said

Here, **he** refers to Moses. Alternate translation: [and Moses said] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

to him

Here, **him** refers to Jethro. Alternate translation: [to Jethro] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

my brothers

Here the term **brothers** refers more broadly to all of Moses' people group, those he is related to. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [my relatives] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

and see whether they are still alive

Later in the Bible we are told that Moses was in Midian for 40 years. Moses' request may have been literal or an idiom that meant he wanted to know how they were doing. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Go in peace

This is a phrase of assent and blessing. It may be necessary for some languages to explicitly add, "Yes," to the beginning of Jethro's response. (See: **Blessings (p.1302)**)

Exodus 4:19

And Yahweh said to Moses

The timing and situation for Yahweh speaking to Moses here is not specified. Some conjecture that it was part of the narrative of the encounter with Yahweh from the previous verses but placed after his request to Jethro for an unknown reason. Another speculation is that Moses delayed returning to Egypt (either by his own choice, Yahweh's instructions, or someone else delaying him) and Yahweh came and told him again (the UST explicitly offers this optional translation). (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1323)**)

who were seeking your life

This means they were seeking to end his life, that is, to kill him.

Exodus 4:20

and his sons

Moses' second son is not introduced until 18:4 but had already been born before they left Midian. It is not necessary to make this explicit here, if it would confuse your readers you could add a footnote. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.1467)**)

and he returned toward the land of Egypt

It is clear from 4:24 and 25 that Moses' family went with him. If this is confusing in your language, you may need to change from **he** to "they" **returned**. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1351)**)

and he returned toward the land of Egypt

After the incident on the road in verses 24–26. Moses' family is not mentioned again until 18:2, which says that Moses sent them back, so it may be better to make a translation similar to the UST, which only commits to the family starting on the way to Egypt. This option has the further benefit of allowing for the several events that happen before Moses gets to Egypt. The ULT's **toward** is another way of giving space in the translation for the next several events. (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1323)**)

the staff of God

The phrase **the staff of God** refers to the staff that God told Moses to take with him in 4:17. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

the staff of God

The book describes this staff as **the staff of God** because God appointed it as his instrument so that Moses could do miraculous works through it. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Make sure your translation does not lead people to think the staff was a magic wand or shaman's staff that had its own power or power from Moses or that the staff gave Moses the ability to command God. In every instance where miracles happened, first God told Moses to do something with the staff, then Moses obeyed, and then God caused a miracle. Alternate translation: [the staff that God had told him to bring because God intended to work powerfully through it when Moses stretched it out.] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 4:21

While you are going

This begins a direct quotation that continues to the end of 4:23. It contains up to fourth-level quotations. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with an opening first-level quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the beginning of a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p. 1436)**)

see

Most translations and interpretations of the verb **see** take it to mean something like “see that you do.”

all the miracles that I put in your hand

Here the miracles are spoken of as if they were items Moses could carry. In part, this may be because the three signs already given to Moses involved the use of his hand. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [all the wonders I have authorized you to perform] (See: **Metaphor (p. 1399)**)

before the face of Pharaoh

This time, while **before the face of** still has the standard figurative meaning of “in the presence of,” it is a much more literal use here. Moses is to actually do the miracles in front of Pharaoh so he can see them. Alternate translation: [so Pharaoh can see them] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

But as for me, I shall strengthen

Referring to himself in the opening of this sentence serves to emphasize a contrast between what might normally be expected and what will actually happen. Translate this in a way that clearly contrasts the performance of miracles before Pharaoh (which might be expected to lead to him releasing the Israelites) with what Yahweh says Pharaoh will do. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1313)**)

But as for me, I shall strengthen his heart

This means that God will make him stubborn. His stubborn attitude is spoken of as if his heart would be made stronger. If the heart is not the body part your culture uses to refer to a person’s will, consider using whichever organ your culture would use for this image. Alternate translation: [But as for me, I will cause Pharaoh to be stubborn] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

and he will not let the people go

Make it clear in your translation that this is a result of God hardening Pharaoh’s heart. (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1320)**)

Exodus 4:22

Thus says Yahweh

This is the first of hundreds of occurrences throughout the Old Testament of a standard phrase, **Thus says Yahweh**, used to introduce direct, authoritative instruction from Yahweh. It would be good for your team to have a standard way to translate this that makes it clear that the words that come next are directly from God. If your language has a standard way of introducing a new message from your rulers that alerts the hearers that these are the words of the rulers, that would be a good phrase to consider.

Thus says Yahweh

This begins a second-level quotation that continues until the end of 4:23. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with an opening second-level quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the beginning of a quotation within a quotation. However, you may want to translate this as an indirect quotation in order to reduce the levels of quotations in this passage. Alternate translation: [that Yahweh says] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1439)**)

Israel is my son, my firstborn

This is the beginning of a third-level quotation that continues until the end of 4:23. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with an opening third-level quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the beginning of a quotation within a quotation within a quotation. (If you chose to translate, “Thus says Yahweh,” as an indirect quote, this will be a second- level quotation.) (See: **Quote Markings (p.1436)**)

my son

Yahweh expresses his affection for the Israelites by calling them his **son**. Some languages may need to change the metaphor here into a simile. See the UST. (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Israel is

The word **Israel** here represents all the people of Israel as a group. It is important to keep the singular reference to Israel as son rather than change it to something like ‘the Israelites are my children,’ because God is making a particular contrast here between his son and Pharaoh’s son. Some languages may not be able to use “Israel” as a collective noun and may need to choose a translation like “the nation of Israel” or “the Israelite nation.” (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1304)**)

Israel is

The Israelite nation is often referred to simply by the name of the patriarch. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [The Israelites are] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 4:23

Let my son go that he may serve me

This is a fourth-level quotation. It should be marked in some manner that distinguishes it from the outer levels. (If you chose to translate “Thus says Yahweh” as an indirect quote, this will be a third-level quotation.) (See: **Quote Markings (p.1436)**)

and I said to you, ‘Let my son go that he may serve me.’ But you have refused

The fourth-level quotation here may be a good one to translate as an indirect quotation in order to reduce the levels of quotations in this passage. Alternate translation: [and I told you to let my son go that he may serve me. But you have refused] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1333)**)

my son

Yahweh continues to metaphorically speak of Israel as **my son.** See how you translated it in the previous verse. Alternate translation: [the Israelite nation, which is like a son to me] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

that he may serve me.’ & to let him go

The pronouns **he** and **him** agree with “son.” What you use may depend on how you translated son in the previous verse. (See: **Pronouns (p.1429)**)

Behold

This is used to draw attention to surprising information that follows. Alternate translation: [Know this]

your son

Here, **your son** refers to the actual son of Pharaoh.

your son, your firstborn

After this phrase, the three levels of direct quotations end, bringing a complete close to all quotations that started in verses 21 and 22. If you are using direct quotations, at the end of this verse you should have three closing markers: third level, second level and first level. In English, it looks like **” ’ ”** (without spaces). (See: **Quote Markings (p.1436)**)

Exodus 4:24

And it happened

This introduces a new event. Mark the transition in a natural way in your language. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

that he encountered & to kill him

Here, it is not clear who **him** refers to. Most commentators believe it refers to Moses, but it could refer to the son, though that is less likely. If it is necessary to choose for your translation, use Moses. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

and he sought

Here, **he** refers to Yahweh. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

Exodus 4:25

Zipporah

Zipporah is the name of Moses' wife. See how you translated it in 2:21. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

Zipporah

Zipporah is introduced here as a new character. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new character. (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1385)**)

a flint

This was a flake or a sharp piece of a hard gray rock that was used as a knife.. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

the foreskin of

The **foreskin** is the retractable fold of skin which covers and protects the end of the penis. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

to his feet

It is possible that the word **feet** may have been a more respectful way to refer to the genital area of the body. However, that possibility is not high enough that you should translate it either literally as genitals or with another euphemism meaning genitals in your language. If you have a word that means primarily feet or legs, but could in some cases also euphemistically mean genitals, you may consider it. (See: **Euphemism (p.1345)**)

Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me

The meaning of this metaphor is unclear. It was probably a known saying in that culture. Alternate translation: [You are related to me by this blood] or [You are my husband because of blood] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 4:26

And he relented

God **relented** as a result of Zipporah's action. Consider a conjunction or other form that expresses result, as in the UST. (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1320)**)

And he relented

Here, **he** refers to Yahweh. Alternate translation: [Yahweh relented] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p. 1431)**)

from him

As in 4:24, **him** could refer to either Moses or the son, but most commentators think it is still Moses. The UST uses "anyone" to preserve ambiguity. Alternate translation: [from Moses] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p. 1431)**)

bridegroom of blood

This is a unique quotation because Zipporah probably does not speak again; rather, the quotation refers back to her statement in 4:25. Use a form from your language for quoting a portion of what someone previously said. If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this as an indirect quotation. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1333)**)

bridegroom of blood" because of the circumcision

It is not clear if the quotation includes **because of the circumcision** or if that is a comment explaining the quotation. Translations are divided in where they end the quotation, but most exclude **because of the circumcision**, and it is best to follow that unless a locally respected translation includes it. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1436)**)

Exodus 4:27

And & said

You may want to add a word that marks the beginning of a new part of the story, as the UST does. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

Aaron

Aaron is introduced as a new participant. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new character. (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1385)**)

at the mountain of God

See how you translated this in 3:1. (See: **Possession (p.1425)**)

and he kissed

This was a traditional way of greeting which showed love. You can make this explicit, as in the UST. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1454)**)

Exodus 4:28

he had sent him & he commanded him

These are a bit awkward to translate in English, so the UST adds more information. Other languages may not have the same difficulty.

he had sent him & he commanded him

Here, the pronoun **he** refers to Yahweh, and **him** refers to Moses. Alternate translation: [Yahweh sent Moses ... Yahweh commanded Moses] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

Exodus 4:29

And & went

This begins a new event which you may need to mark in your translation with a transitional word like the UST's "When." (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

Exodus 4:30

And he did

Here, **he** could refer to either Aaron or Moses. Alternate translation: [and Aaron did] or [and Moses did] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

before the eyes of the people

Here, **before the eyes** means he did the signs so they could see them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [in their sight] (See: **Metonymy (p. 1405)**)

the people

Context suggests that **people** refers to the leaders gathered in 4:29.

Exodus 4:31

the people

Context suggests that **people** refers to the leaders gathered in 4:29.

had attended & the sons of Israel

Alternate translation: [saw the Israelites] or [was concerned about the Israelites]

and they bowed and prostrated themselves

This action was an expression of thankful worship. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [they bowed their heads in awe] or [they bowed down low in reverence.] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1454)**)

Exodus 5

Exodus 5 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

- v. 1–5: Moses gives Pharaoh Yahweh's message
- v. 6–21: Pharaoh makes the Israelites work harder
- v. 22–23: Moses asks Yahweh why things went badly

Exodus 5:1

And afterward, Moses and Aaron went in and said to Pharaoh

The time phrase, **and afterward**, marks a transition in the narrative. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: [After that] (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

And afterward, Moses and Aaron went in and said to Pharaoh

It is unclear how long Moses and Aaron waited before they went to see Pharaoh. (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1323)**)

went in

In this instance, depending on how they have to set scenes, some languages may need to use “came in.” (See: **Go and Come (p.1362)**)

Pharaoh

Pharaoh is reintroduced as a participant in the narrative for the first time since chapter two. Use the natural form in your language for reintroducing a character. (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1385)**)

Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel: ‘Let my people go, and they shall celebrate me in the wilderness

This is a direct quotation. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this by marking it with first-level quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation. There is a second-level quotation fully contained within this portion which is addressed elsewhere. There may be other quotations in this chapter; they will be marked by the same punctuation, but they will not have their own notes unless there is something unique about them. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1436)**)

Thus says Yahweh

This quotation formula is used to introduce commands from Yahweh. See Chapter 4 Introduction for more information.

and they shall celebrate

This is a celebration to worship Yahweh. Alternate translation: [so they can worship me with eating and drinking]

Exodus 5:2

And & said

The result here is exactly as God has said; therefore, a contrastive transition word is reasonable but not required, given the immediate human context. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1313)**)

Who is Yahweh, that I should listen to his voice to let Israel go

This is not a rhetorical question, though Pharaoh may have spoken with contempt. Pharaoh would have considered himself a god. The Egyptians had several gods, and most people groups were assumed to have their own gods. Therefore, Pharaoh had truly not heard of Yahweh (who has just revealed his name to Moses).

Israel & Israel

Here the nation is spoken of as an individual. If your language does not use singular nouns in that way, you can use a different expression. Alternate translation: [the nation of Israel] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1304)**)

to his voice

Here, **his voice** represent the words God spoke. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [to what he says] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

and moreover

This functions to strengthen Pharaoh's statement about his decision. Alternate translation: [and most definitely]

Exodus 5:3

And they said

It may not make sense in all languages for multiple people to speak. Alternate translation, since Aaron was appointed as Moses' spokesman: [Aaron replied] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1351)**)

The God of the Hebrews

This term, **The God of the Hebrews**, is also used for Yahweh, the Israelites' God.

with us. & let us go & and let us sacrifice & he come upon us

Here, **us** (or "we" in UST) refers to the Hebrew people (the Israelites). It excludes Pharaoh and his people. Your language may require you to mark these forms. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1349)**)

with the sword

Here, **sword** represents war or an attack by enemies. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [cause our enemies to attack us] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 5:4

Moses and Aaron, why are you causing the people to leave off from their tasks

Pharaoh uses this rhetorical question to express his anger toward Moses and Aaron for taking the Israelites away from their work. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [Stop distracting the people from doing their work!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1445)**)

Go to your burdens

This **your** could refer to Moses and Aaron, or it could mean “all you Israelite people.” The second meaning is more likely. If your language uses different forms of “you” depending on the number of people addressed, use a dual or plural form here. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

Exodus 5:5

And Pharaoh said

It is unusual for the same speaker to be reintroduced like this. Some translations omit the repetition, but there is another option. This statement may be more connected to the next couple of verses, so it might be appropriate to make a minor break before this verse. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.1327)**)

And Pharaoh said, “Behold, the people of the land are now many, and you have caused them to rest from their burdens

This statement by Pharaoh may have been him commenting to himself, or he may have only thought this statement silently; either way, it led to his next actions. If this would be confusing in your language, consider stating it in a way that clarifies that his statement or thoughts here impacted his next actions. (See: **Aside (p.1283)**)

Behold

Behold is a term meant to focus the attention of the listener on what the speaker is about to say.

and you have caused & to rest

Here, **you** means Moses and Aaron. If your language uses different forms of “you” depending on the number of people addressed, use a dual form if you have one, or if not, use a plural form here. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

Exodus 5:6

And & Pharaoh ordered the taskmasters among the people and officers, saying

Pharaoh may have sent a messenger or messengers to the taskmasters and officers or spoken to one or a few representatives of them at his court rather than speaking to them directly. Alternate translation: [And ... Pharaoh gave an order to the taskmasters among the people and officers. He said,]

the taskmasters

Taskmasters were Egyptians whose job it was to force the Israelites to do hard work. These are probably the same as the “overseers” of labor gangs from Exodus 1:11, but here the term is harsher. Alternate translation: [oppressors]

and officers

Officers were probably Israelite slaves who were in charge of the other Israelites but who answered to the Egyptian taskmasters.

saying

Here, **saying** is a way of introducing a direct quotation in Hebrew; most translations can omit it without harm.

Exodus 5:7

Do not continue

This command was given to multiple people; if your language distinguishes between singular and plural forms when giving commands, make sure this is a plural form. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

as yesterday and the day before yesterday

This is a Hebrew idiom meaning "in the past." If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: [as you used to do] or [as was done previously] (See: **Idiom (p. 1378)**)

Exodus 5:8

you shall put

If your language uses different forms of “you” depending on the number of people addressed, use a plural form here. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

the bricks

Bricks are blocks made of clay or mud with straw in them. They are hardened in the sun or in another manner before they are used for building. See how you translated in 1:14. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

yesterday and the day before yesterday

This is a Hebrew idiom meaning “in the past.” See how you translated this in 5:7 Alternate translation: [before] or [previously] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Exodus 5:9

and shall not gaze at words of lies

Here words are spoken of as if they could be looked upon. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: [and not listen to words that are lies] (See: **Idiom (p. 1378)**)

Exodus 5:10

And & went out

This begins a new scene, which may need to be marked in a certain way in your language. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

the taskmasters of

Taskmasters were Egyptians whose job was to force the Israelites to do hard work. See how you translated this in 5:6.

Thus says Pharaoh

This is the same quotation introduction as is used when Yahweh gives a direct command. See Chapter 4 Introduction for more information.

and said to the people, saying, “Thus says Pharaoh

It might be helpful in some languages to translate **thus says Pharaoh** as an indirect quote so that his conveyed command is not a quote within a quote. Alternate translation: [and told the people that Pharaoh says] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1333)**)

I & not

This is the beginning of a second-level quotation that continues until the end of verse 11. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with an opening second-level quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the start of a quotation within a quotation. However, you could also translate this as an indirect quote. See UST. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1439)**)

I am not giving straw to you

The structure of this phrase and the one that opens the next verse create a strong contrast between what **I** (Pharaoh) and **you** (you all, the Israelites) will do. Translate this in a way that emphasizes, if possible, the contrast between **I** and **you.** Alternate translation: [It is not I who will give you straw.] (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1313)**)

I am not giving straw to you

Pharaoh uses **I** to refer to his ownership and commands. Pharaoh does not physically give the Israelites straw. Rather, he had commanded his servants to take straw that belonged to Pharaoh and give it to the Israelites. Now he told his servants to stop providing straw. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [My servants will no longer give you my straw] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

to you

You is plural and refers to the Israelite people. If your language uses different forms of “you” depending on the number of people addressed, use a plural form here. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

Exodus 5:11

You go and get your own straw from wherever you might find it

The structure of this phrase serves as the opposing side of the contrast Pharaoh sets up in the last phrase. By explicitly using a pronoun with a command, he is emphasizing who will go get straw. If possible, translate this in a way that emphasizes the contrast between **I** and **you.** See the previous verse. Alternate translation: [Rather, it is you yourselves who must go get straw from wherever you might find it] (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1313)**)

You

Here, **you** is plural and refers to the Israelite people. If your language uses different forms of "you" depending on the number of people addressed, use a plural form here. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

You & your own

The repetition of **you** (as **your**) emphasizes that the Egyptians will no longer help the slaves. See the UST. (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p.1442)**)

for there will be no reducing of things from your slavery

If this double negative would be misunderstood in your language, you could translate it as a positive statement. Alternate translation: [for you must continue to make the same number of bricks as before] (See: **Double Negatives (p.1335)**)

Exodus 5:12

throughout all the land of Egypt

This is a generalization used to show the extra effort Israel made to meet Pharaoh's demands. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language that means many places. Alternate translation: [to many places throughout Egypt] (See: **Hyperbole (p.1371)**)

stubble

Stubble is the part of a plant that is left over after harvest. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 5:13

Now the taskmasters

Taskmasters were Egyptians whose job it was to force the Israelites to do hard work. See how you translated this in Exodus 5:6.

Now the taskmasters

The change of subject is emphasized here. If your language has a way of specifically focusing on the actor in a narrative, use it here. See the UST for how that is done in English. (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1385)**)

the task of day by day

Day by day means “daily.” Alternate translation: [the daily task]

Exodus 5:14

the taskmasters of

Taskmasters are Egyptians whose job it was to force the Israelites to do hard work. See how you translated this in Exodus 5:6.

And the officers of the sons of Israel, & were beaten

The text does not specify who beat the officers. It was probably either the taskmasters or someone the taskmasters ordered to beat the officers. 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. Alternate translation: [And the taskmasters beat the officers of the sons of Israel] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Why have you not finished your required brick making like yesterday and the day before yesterday, neither yesterday nor today

The taskmasters used this question to show they were angry with the lack of bricks. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [You are not producing enough bricks, either yesterday or today, as you did in the past!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1445)**)

have you & finished your required

Here, **you** and **your** are plural. If your language uses different forms of "you" depending on the number of people addressed, use a plural form here. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

have you not finished your required

Here, **you** and **your** do not simply refer to the officers; they refer to the groups of Israelite workers the officers are in charge of. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [have your teams not finished their required] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1456)**)

like yesterday and the day before yesterday

This is a Hebrew idiom meaning "in the past." Here it specifically refers to the time before the Egyptians stopped giving the Israelites straw. See how you translated this in 5:7 Alternate translation: [before] or [previously] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

neither yesterday nor today

This time expression refers to more recent days, ones since the Egyptians stopped providing the straw to the Israelites.

Exodus 5:15

And & came in

This begins a new scene, which may need to be marked in a certain way in your language. The officers have gone to where Pharaoh is. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

And & came in

You will need to decide if go or come is the better translation in your language. (See: **Go and Come (p.1362)**)

to your servants

Here, the Israelite officers use the term **your servants** to refer to themselves in the third person as a way of showing humility. It is also possible that they mean to include all the Israelites. Either option is valid if your language must state who is meant by “your servants.” Alternate translation: [to us] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1351)**)

Exodus 5:16

No straw is being given to your servants

The text does not specify who is not giving them straw. From the context, the taskmasters and, by implication, Pharaoh himself are the ones not doing this. 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. Alternate translation: [You are not giving your servants any straw.] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

to your servants. & your servants

Here, the Israelite officers use the term **your servants** to refer to themselves in the third person as a way of showing humility. It is also possible that they mean to include all the Israelites. Either option is valid if your language must state who is meant by "your servants." Alternate translation: [to us] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1351)**)

they are saying

Here, **they** refers to the Egyptian taskmasters. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

And behold

And behold is used to draw attention to surprising information that follows.

your servants are beaten

The text does not specify who beat the officers. It was probably either the taskmasters or someone the taskmasters ordered to beat the officers. 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. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

but it is the sin of your people

The Israelites are indirectly accusing Pharaoh of doing wrong. To translate this, consider polite or indirect ways of making accusations in your culture. (See: **Euphemism (p.1345)**)

but it is the sin of

Alternate translation: [but it is the wrongdoing of]

Exodus 5:17

You are & you

These uses of **you** are plural. If your language uses different forms of “you” depending on the number of people addressed, use a plural form here. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

You are lazy! Lazy

Pharaoh repeats himself for emphasis. In your translation, make sure the idea of laziness or idleness is repeated or strengthened in a way that is natural. Alternate translation: [You are extremely lazy] (See: **Exclamations (p.1347)**)

Let us go sacrifice to Yahweh

Here the king is quoting another person’s speech. This is a second-level quotation. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this by marking it with second-level quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation within a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1436)**)

Exodus 5:18

And straw will not be given to you

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. The subject could be "I" (as in Pharaoh) or "we" (as in the Egyptians or Pharaoh and his taskmasters) or "my people." See UST. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

to you, & you will give

Here, **you** means all the Israelites or the officers as representatives of all the Israelites. If your language uses different forms of "you" depending on the number of people addressed, use a plural form here. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

Exodus 5:19

And the officers of the sons of Israel saw themselves in distress regarding the saying, “You shall not reduce the day-by-day task from your bricks

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. See the UST. (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1320)**)

themselves

Here the officers are both the subject and object, because they are thinking about their own situation. Use a way that is natural in your language to indicate this. (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p.1442)**)

And & saw themselves in distress regarding the saying

Alternate translation: [knew that they were in trouble, because the king said] or [perceived themselves to be in danger, because the king said]

Exodus 5:20

And they met

A new scene begins here, which may need to be marked in a certain way in your language. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

And they met & to meet them when they came out

Here, **they** and **them** refer to the officers. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

Exodus 5:21

May Yahweh look on you and judge

The Israelite officers used this form to curse Moses and Aaron.

on you and judge

You refers to Moses and Aaron. If your language uses different forms of "you" depending on the number of people addressed, use a dual or plural form here. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

you have caused our scent to stink in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of his servants

The Egyptians responded to the Israelites the same way they would respond to a foul odor. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [you have caused Pharaoh and his servants to hate us] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

a sword into their hand

Here, **a sword into their hand** is a metonym for "a reason in their mind." The Israelites are afraid that the Egyptians will feel that they are doing the right thing if they kill the Israelites, because Moses and Aaron are making demands to the king and because the Egyptians view the Israelites as lazy and dangerous. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [them a reason to think they would be right] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 5:22

Was this why you sent me

This question shows how disappointed Moses was that the Egyptians were treating the Israelites even more harshly now. He is expressing that he thinks God has caused the opposite of what he promised to happen. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [I thought you sent me to rescue them.] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1445)**)

Exodus 5:23

in your name

Here, **in your name** indicates that Moses delivers Yahweh's message. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [for you] or [your message for him] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

And you have certainly not rescued

In Hebrew, **rescued** is repeated for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Exodus 6

Exodus 6 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

- v. 1–13, 28–30: Yahweh repeats his commissioning of Moses after the bad events recorded in chapter 5
- v. 14–27: Genealogy of Moses and Aaron

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Repetition of events:

Most of the content of this chapter is very similar to the events and dialogue in chapters 3–4. For consistency, translators should consult the decisions they made there while keeping in mind that this narrative is not exactly the same. Also, verses 10–12 and verses 28–30 are very similar to each other. These events are probably a recommissioning of Moses. After his first encounter with Pharaoh went very poorly and the Israelites seem to reject God, Yahweh reminds Moses of his promises and power.

Referring to God

A name for God (**Yahweh**) and a title for God (**El Shaddai**) are mentioned in this chapter (6:2–3). The precise meaning of El Shaddai is not known, but most scholars think it means something like “almighty.” Translators who have worked on Genesis may find confusing the statement that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did not know Yahweh as the name of God.

Other possible translation difficulties:

With little explanation, a large portion of the chapter is devoted to the genealogy of Moses and Aaron. Some of the people in the genealogy lived much longer than is normal for humans today. If translators are not familiar with the lengths of people’s lives in the early days of the world (as recorded in Genesis, especially chapter 5), this may cause confusion.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Promised Land

According to the covenant Yahweh made with Abraham, Egypt is not the home of the Hebrew people. Their home is the Promised Land in Canaan. The people are to return home to their land. (See: [[rc:*///tw/dict/bible/kt/covenant]] and [[rc:*///tw/dict/bible/kt/promisedland]])

God and his people

In verse 7, note the mention of a very important biblical theme of God being “your God” and the special relationship that his people have with him.

Exodus 6:1

Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh: for by a strong hand he will let them go; and by a strong hand he will drive them out of his land

This is a direct quotation. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this by marking it with first-level quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation. There may be other quotations in this chapter; they will be marked by the same punctuation, but they will not have their own notes unless there is something unique about them. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1436)**)

Now

This refers to future events starting very soon. Alternate translation: [Starting soon] or [Very soon] (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1323)**)

by a strong hand & and by a strong hand

Here, **hand** is a metonym for power. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [by a strong power ... and by a strong power] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

by a strong hand & and by a strong hand

It is not clear in the text whose **hand** is referred to here. The options include: (1) Both refer to God's hand (forcing Pharaoh's actions) (2) Both refer to Pharaoh's hand (forcing the Israelites out) (3) They don't refer to the same person's hand; the first refers to God's and the second to Pharaoh's. The UST has followed (1), which is the most common interpretation. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: (1) [by my strong hand ... and by my strong hand]; (2) "by his strong hand ... and by his strong hand" (3) "by my strong hand ... and by his strong hand" (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

for by a strong hand he will let them go; and by a strong hand he will drive them out of his land

These two phrases mean similar things. God says the same thing twice, in similar ways, for emphasis. If saying the same thing twice might be confusing for your readers, you can combine the phrases into one. Alternate translation: [I will force him to let my people leave the land] However, there is a slight difference in meaning, and you could also choose to bring that out in your translation. The second phrase intensifies the first by portraying Pharaoh as not merely letting the Israelites go, but as forcing them to leave the land. Alternate translation: [I will force him to let them go, in fact, I will force him to force them to leave his land] (See: **Parallelism (p.1417)**)

of his land

Alternate translation: [from Egypt]

Exodus 6:2

And God spoke to Moses, and said to him

There is a transition here. Before this verse, Yahweh was answering Moses' question more directly. At the beginning of this verse, Yahweh is reintroduced as "God" because he begins to make a clarifying statement about himself and his relationship with the Israelites and their ancestors as well as his plans for the Israelites. Much of this section repeats what Yahweh has already told Moses. You may want to consider a section break before this verse. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

Exodus 6:3

as El Shaddai

El Shaddai is a title for God that many scholars think means “almighty.” You will need to decide if you will transliterate the term into your language or translate the meaning. Either approach has broad support. Alternate translation: [as the strongest God of all] (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.1331)**)

but by my name Yahweh I was not known to them

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. Alternate translation: [but they did not know me by my name Yahweh] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

but by my name Yahweh I was not known to them

This statement is very difficult to understand as God’s name, Yahweh, is used throughout Genesis, including by Abraham and others. There are many theories about what it means; the view followed by the UST is that now God is revealing to the Israelites a fuller meaning of his divine name than what Abraham and others knew. Alternate translation: [but my name Yahweh was not understood by them]

Exodus 6:4

to give to them the land of Canaan

This is the content of the covenant promise from God to his people. Some languages may need to make this part a direct quotation. To do so, begin a new sentence. Alternate translation: [I said, “I will give you the land of Canaan”] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1333)**)

the land of their sojourning, in which they sojourned

These two phrases mean similar things. If saying the same thing twice might be confusing for your readers, you can combine the phrases into one. Alternate translation: [the land they lived in as temporary residents] or [the land that was not their home but where they lived as foreigners] (See: **Parallelism (p.1417)**)

Exodus 6:5

the groaning of

Here, **groaning** means making sad sounds because of pain and suffering.

and I have remembered my covenant

I have remembered my covenant means God is going to take action. Alternate translation: [I will keep my promise]

Exodus 6:6

Therefore

God is now telling Moses to deliver a message to the Israelites of what God is going to do because of everything that he said in verses 2–5. The reason-result relationship is strongly marked here, so translations should make sure to use a connector that marks verse 6–8 as a result of verses 2–5. Alternate translation: [Because of this] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1320)**)

Therefore, say to the sons of Israel

This is a command from Yahweh to Moses. Alternate translation: [So Yahweh told Moses to say to the Israelites]

you & you & you

Here every occurrence of **you** refers to the Israelites. If your language uses different forms of "you" depending on the number of people addressed, use a plural form here. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

from under the burdens of the Egyptians

This refers to all the hard work the Egyptians made the Israelites do. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [from the hard work the Egyptians force you to do] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1456)**)

with an outstretched arm

Here, **arm** is a figurative way of referring to Yahweh's power, influence, and capacity for action. **Outstretched** means that he is using that power. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [by my great strength] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

and with & judgments

Here, the term **judgments** refers to the plagues that God is about to send to harm Egypt and the Egyptians. Each plague is a response to Pharaoh's stubbornness. Alternate translation: [and by (greatly) harming the Egyptians]

Exodus 6:7

you & to you & And you will know & your God, & you

Here every occurrence of **you** refers to the Israelites. If your language uses different forms of “you” depending on the number of people addressed, use a plural form here. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

from under the burdens of the Egyptians

This refers to all the hard work the Egyptians forced upon the Israelites. See what you did in the previous verse. Alternate translation: [from the hard work the Egyptians force you to do] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1456)**)

Exodus 6:8

you & to you

Here every occurrence of **you** refers to the Israelites. If your language uses different forms of “you” depending on the number of people addressed, use a plural form here. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

I raised my hand

This is an action that signifies making an oath. Raising the hand may not have the same meaning in your culture, so you may need to use a different symbolic oath-taking action in your translation or simply translate the meaning. Alternate translation: [I promised] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1454)**)

as a possession

This means the Israelites will own the land. Alternate translation: [as your own land]

Exodus 6:9

but they did not listen to Moses, because of shortness of spirit and because of hard slavery

In some languages it will be necessary to put the reason for the people not listening before the result. Alternate translation: [but because of shortness of spirit and because of hard service, they did not listen to Moses] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1320)**)

because of shortness of spirit

Here, the people's **spirit** is spoken of as something that could be measured. By calling it "short," the author is saying they did not have very much motivation or hope. Alternate translation: [because they had no hope]

Exodus 6:10

saying

This is used to mark the beginning of a direct quotation. It can be omitted if it is unnatural.

Exodus 6:11

that he should let the sons of Israel go from his land

This statement tells Moses what to discuss with Pharaoh. Some languages may need to covey this information as a direct quotation. Be careful to change the third-person pronouns to second-person pronouns if you do this. Alternate translation: [and say, 'You must let the sons of Israel go from your land'] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1333)**)

Exodus 6:12

before the face of Yahweh

Here, **face** represents the presence of a person. There may also be a hint of impudence in Moses' attitude that is conveyed by the words **before the face of Yahweh**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [in the presence of Yahweh] or [boldly to Yahweh] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Behold

Behold is a term meant to focus the attention of the listener on what the speaker is about to say. If there is not a good way to translate this term in your language, this term can be omitted from the translation, or you can use an alternate translation like "as you know."

Behold, the sons of Israel have not listened to me, so how will Pharaoh listen to me

Moses asked this question in hopes that God would change his mind about using Moses. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [Since the Israelites did not listen to me, neither will Pharaoh!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1445)**)

Behold, the sons of Israel have not listened to me, so how will Pharaoh listen to me

Moses is presenting a reasoned argument: since this, then probably that. Use a natural way of expressing such arguments in your language. Alternate translation: [Since the sons of Israel have not listened to me, why would you think Pharaoh would listen to me?] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1320)**)

And I have uncircumcised lips

This is a metaphor that means that Moses was not a good speaker. It is somewhat crude; your translation of this phrase could convey that Moses spoke impolitely. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And I do not speak well] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 6:13

and he gave them a command to the sons of Israel and to Pharaoh

This phrase is somewhat difficult to translate. Here, **command** could also be translated as “charge” or “commission.” Another difficulty is knowing to whom the command is directed: is it to Moses and Aaron or are they to give the command to Pharaoh and the Israelites; thus **to** could be translated as “for” or “regarding.” Alternate translation: [and he charged them regarding the sons of Israel and regarding Pharaoh] or [and he gave them a command for the sons of Israel and for Pharaoh] or [and he gave them a commission to the sons of Israel and to Pharaoh]

Exodus 6:14

Verses 14–27 are background information. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.1289)**)

the heads of

Here, **heads** refers to the original leaders of the clan. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [the ancestors of] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Reuben, & Israel: Hanoch and Pallu, Hezron and Karmi. & Reuben

These are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

Exodus 6:15

Simeon & Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jakin, and Zohar, and Shaul—& Simeon

These are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

Exodus 6:16

Levi, & Gershon, and Kohath, and Merari. & Levi

These are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

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Alternate translation: [one hundred thirty-seven] (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

Exodus 6:17

Gershon & Libni and Shimei

These are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

Exodus 6:18

Kohath & Amram and Izhar and Hebron and Uzziel. & Kohath

These are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

133

Alternate translation: [one hundred thirty-three] (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

Exodus 6:19

Merari & Mahli and Mushi

These are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

Exodus 6:20

Amram & Aaron & Moses. & Amram

These are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

Jochebed

This is the name of a woman. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

his aunt

Here the term **his aunt** specifically means his father’s sister. If your language uses a different term that is specific in this way, translators should use it. (See: **Kinship (p.1391)**)

137

Alternate translation: [one hundred thirty-seven] (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

Exodus 6:21

Izhar were Korah, and Nepheg, and Zichri

These are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

Exodus 6:22

Uzziel were Mishael, and Elzaphan, and Sithri

These are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

Exodus 6:23

Aaron & Amminadab, & Nahshon, & Nadab & Abihu, Eleazar & Ithamar

These are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

Elisheba

This is the name of a woman. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

Exodus 6:24

Korah were Assir, and Elkanah, and Abiasaph

These are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

the Korahites

This was the name of the clan of people descended from Korah. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

Exodus 6:25

And Eleazar, & Aaron & Putiel. & Phinehas

These are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

the heads of

Here, **heads** represents family leaders. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [These were the leaders of the families] (See: **Metonymy (p. 1405)**)

Exodus 6:26

by their hosts

The term **hosts** refers to a large group of people often organized into groups for war. Alternate translation: [by their groups] or [by their divisions] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 6:27

to bring out

This expresses their goal when they spoke to Pharaoh. Use a natural way in your language for indicating purpose. See the UST. (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.1315)**)

Exodus 6:28

And it happened on a day that

This marks a transition from the record of the genealogy back to the narrative. Consider placing a section break at the start of this verse. Alternate translation: [One day] (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

Exodus 6:29

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 6:30

to the face of Yahweh

Here, **face** represents the presence of a person. There may also be a hint of impudence in Moses' attitude that is conveyed by saying he spoke before **the face of Yahweh**. See how you translated this in 6:12. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [in the presence of Yahweh] or [boldly to Yahweh] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Behold, I have uncircumcised lips, so how will Pharaoh listen to me

Moses asks this question hoping to change God's mind about sending him. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [Behold, I am not a good speaker. Pharaoh will certainly not listen to me!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1445)**)

Behold

Behold is a term meant to focus the attention of the listener on what the speaker is about to say. If there is not a good way to translate this term in your language, this term can be omitted from the translation, or you can use an alternate translation like "as you know."

I have uncircumcised lips

This is a metaphor that means that Moses thought he was not a good speaker. It is somewhat crude, and your translation of this phrase could convey that Moses spoke impolitely. See how you translated this in 6:12. Alternate translation: [I always fail to speak well] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 7

Exodus 7 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

- v. 1–9: The end of Yahweh's re-sending of Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh
- v. 10–13: Pharaoh's first refusal, the sign of the snakes
- v. 14–25: First plague: the Nile turns to blood

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Miracles

When Yahweh had Moses perform miracles, Pharaoh's men were able to copy these miracles. It is unknown how they were able to do this, but since it was not from Yahweh, they were probably done under some evil power. (See: [[rc:*///tw/dict/bible/kt/miracle]] and [[rc:*///tw/dict/bible/kt/evil]])

Pharaoh's hard heart

Pharaoh's heart is often described as hard, strong, or heavy in this chapter. This means that he was not willing to obey Yahweh's instructions.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

- Moses as God to Pharaoh
- A number of difficult terms: prophet, signs, wonders, miracles, sorcerers, magicians, magic, judgments, canals, reservoirs
- The use of "heart" to refer to the seat of will and emotion
- Up to third-level quotations

Exodus 7:1

Moses

After this phrase, a direct quote begins that continues to the end of 7:5. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with an opening first-level quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the beginning of a quotation. There may be other quotations in this chapter; they will be marked by the same punctuation, but they will not have their own notes unless there is something unique about them. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1436)**)

Look

This is used to draw attention to surprising information that follows. Alternate translation: [Listen carefully]

I have made you God to Pharaoh

This means Moses would represent the same authority to Pharaoh as God did to Moses. See how you translated the very similar phrase in Exodus 4:16. Alternate translation: [I will cause Pharaoh to consider you as a god] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

and your brother Aaron will be your prophet

This phrase compares Aaron to a prophet, because Aaron will actually be the one who proclaims to Pharaoh what Moses tells him. See how you translated a similar phrase in Exodus 4:16. Alternate translation: [and Aaron your brother will act like your prophet] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 7:2

your brother

Aaron is older than Moses. If your language uses a different term for the sibling relationship based on gender and age order, choose the appropriate one. (See: **Kinship (p.1391)**)

that he should let the sons of Israel go from his land

Some languages may need to make this a direct quotation. If so, be sure to mark it as a second-level quotation, subordinate to Yahweh's main speech. See what you did in 6:25. Alternate translation: [saying, "You must let the sons of Israel go from your land"] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1333)**)

from his land

Alternate translation: [from Egypt]

Exodus 7:3

will harden the heart of Pharaoh

This means God will make him stubborn. His stubborn attitude is spoken of as if his **heart** were **hard**. If the **heart** is not the body part your culture uses to refer to a person's will, consider using whichever organ your culture would use for this image. See how you translated this in Exodus 4:21, but note the slightly different metaphor there: the heart being strong vs. **hard** here. Alternate translation: [will cause Pharaoh to be stubborn] (See: **Metaphor (p. 1399)**)

my signs and my miracles

The words **signs** and **wonders** mean basically the same thing. God uses them to emphasize the greatness of what he will do in Egypt. If your language does not use repetition in this way, you can combine them. (See: **Doublet (p. 1338)**)

Exodus 7:4

to you

Here, **you** means Moses and Aaron. If your language uses different forms of “you” depending on the number of people addressed, use a dual form (if you have one) or plural form (if not) here. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

my hand

The words **my hand** represent God’s great power. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [my power] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

on Egypt

Here, **on Egypt** refers to the land and everything in it, including people, animals, and plants. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

my armies, my people, the sons of Israel

These phrases refer to the Israelites in three different ways; they do not refer to three different groups of people. Here, **armies** is the same word translated “hosts” in Exodus 6:26. Alternate translation: [the armies of my Israelite people]

Exodus 7:5

And the Egyptians will know that I am Yahweh

This is the result of God rescuing the Israelites. 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. (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1320)**)

when I stretch out my hand over

This phrase represents God's great power. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [when I show my powerful acts against] (See: **Metonymy (p. 1405)**)

to bring the sons of Israel out from their midst

The goal of God's powerful acts was to rescue the Israelites. Use a natural way in your language for indicating purpose. Alternate translation: [so that I bring the sons of Israel out from their midst] (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.1315)**)

Exodus 7:6

And & did; they did

This repetition emphasizes the statement. If saying the same thing twice might be confusing for your readers, you can combine the phrases into one. (See: **Parallelism (p.1417)**)

Exodus 7:7

This verse contains background information. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.1289)**)

80 & 83

Alternate translation: [eighty ... eighty-three] (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

was a son of 80 years & was a son of 83 years

The phrase **a son of**, followed by a number and then **years**, is an idiom that refers to their age. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Exodus 7:8

And Yahweh said

This verse marks the beginning of new sections, both major and minor. The major story of the plagues and Exodus itself unfolds from here until after Pharaoh's army is defeated at the Sea of Reeds (now known as the Red Sea). The next minor event is the miracle of the rods becoming snakes. Either by using particular forms that your language uses to mark transitions or by making a section break and heading, this transition should be marked for readers. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

saying

Here, **saying** marks the beginning of a direct quote and is often omitted in translation when such a construction is unnatural in the target language. See UST.

Exodus 7:9

For Pharaoh will speak to you, saying, ‘Create a miracle yourself,’ and you shall say to Aaron, ‘Take your staff and throw it down before the face of Pharaoh; let it become a serpent

The two quotations in this verse could be stated as indirect quotes. Alternate translation: [When Pharaoh tells you to do a miracle, then you will tell Aaron to take his staff and throw it down before Pharaoh so that it may become a snake] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1333)**)

Take your staff and throw it down before the face of Pharaoh; let it become a serpent

This is a second-level direct quotation. The second level may either end after **Pharaoh** or at the end of the verse. If you did not decide to make it an indirect quotation, it may be helpful to your readers to indicate this by marking it with second-level quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation within a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1436)**)

saying

Here, **saying** marks the beginning of a direct quote and is often omitted in translation when such a construction is unnatural in the target language. See UST.

to you, & yourself

These pronouns are plural, referring to Moses and Aaron. If your language uses different forms of “you” depending on the number of people addressed, use a dual form (if you have one) or plural form (if not) here. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

before the face of Pharaoh

Although **before the face of** still has the standard figurative meaning of “in the presence of,” it is a much more literal use here. Moses and Aaron are to actually do the miracles in front of Pharaoh so that Pharaoh can see them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [so Pharaoh can see it] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 7:10

before the face of Pharaoh and before the faces of his servants

This time, while **before the face of** still has the standard figurative meaning of “in the presence of,” it is a much more literal use here. Aaron actually does this right in front of Pharaoh and his servants so they could watch what happens. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [where Pharaoh and his servants could see it] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

his servants

Here, **his servants** does not refer common servants but probably refers to important advisors that would be in the king’s court.

Exodus 7:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 7:12

man

Alternate translation: [magician]

And & swallowed up

Alternate translation: [ate up] or [devoured]

And the staff of Aaron swallowed up their staffs

This is a surprising and amusing twist which was not what the magicians expected. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1313)**)

the staff of & their staffs

It may be necessary in some languages to translate the word **staff** as “snake,” since it had turned into one. This may be true if it would not make sense in the target language to say (because it is not living) that a staff swallowed or ate something. It may also may not make sense in some languages to speak of the snakes as staffs once they have been transformed. (See: **Personification (p.1420)**)

Exodus 7:13

And the heart of Pharaoh was strong

Pharaoh's stubborn attitude is spoken of as if his **heart** were **strong**. If the **heart** is not the body part your culture uses to refer to a person's will, consider using whichever organ your culture would use for this image. See how you translated this in Exodus 4:21, but note that this is a neutral statement (it does not say that anyone caused him to be stubborn, as many others in this part of the narrative do). Alternate translation: [Pharaoh was still defiant] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

just as Yahweh had spoken

Because Yahweh's prediction precedes this event, some languages may need to place the reference to that prediction before the statement that it was fulfilled. See UST.

Exodus 7:14

The heart of Pharaoh is heavy

Now Yahweh speaks of Pharaoh's stubborn attitude as if Pharaoh's **heart** were **heavy**. If the **heart** is not the body part your culture uses to refer to a person's will, consider using whichever organ your culture would use for this image. This is a neutral statement (it does not say that anyone caused him to be stubborn as many others in this part of the narrative do). See how you translated this in Exodus 7:13, but note the slightly different metaphor there: the heart being strong vs **heavy** here. Alternate translation: [Pharaoh is defiant] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

And & said

A new scene begins here, which may need to be marked in a certain way in your language. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

Exodus 7:15

Behold

Behold is used to draw attention to information that follows.

he goes out to the water

There are various theories as to what Pharaoh would go down to the Nile to do, but there is no need to speculate or specify in the translation.

Exodus 7:16

And say to him

Alternate translation: [Say to Pharaoh]

the God of the Hebrews

Yahweh claimed the Hebrews (Israelites) as his own. They worshiped him. This is a possessive of social relationship. (See: **Possession (p.1425)**)

Let my people go, and they will serve me in the wilderness. And behold, until now, you have not listened

This is a third-level quotation. It should be marked in some manner that distinguishes it from the outer levels. Alternatively, you could translate it as an indirect quotation as in the UST. If you do this, take care to adjust the pronoun person (second/third) as appropriate. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1439)**)

And behold

Here, **behold** is used to draw attention to the information that follows. In some languages, it will not be translated.

Exodus 7:17

Thus says Yahweh

This quotation formula is used to introduce commands from Yahweh. See Chapter 4 Introduction for more information.

By this

This begins a third-level quotation that continues until the end of verse 18. It should be marked in some manner that distinguishes it from the outer levels. It is possible that the third-level quotation actually ends before or after **Behold,** in which case, in the rest of the quote **I** refers to Moses, not Yahweh. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p. 1439)**)

Behold

Behold is a term meant to focus the attention of the listener on what the speaker is about to say. Alternate translation: [Look at this]

Exodus 7:18

and the river will stink

His warning,**the river will stink**, will happen because the fish die. Alternate translation: [and because of that the river will stink] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1320)**)

to drink water

This phrase introduces a purpose clause. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a purpose clause. Alternate translation: [in order to find water to drink] (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.1315)**)

And the Egyptians will exhaust themselves

Here, **themselves** refers back to the subject (**the Egyptians**) to indicated that the Egyptians are the object of the verb as well. Use a natural form in your language to show that the Egyptians are both subject and object. Alternate translation: [And the Egyptians will exhaust the Egyptians] (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p.1442)**)

from the river

After this phrase, the direct quote of Yahweh's commands ends. Depending on your decisions about the embedded quotation levels, you may have up to three levels of quotations that need to be closed here. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with closing quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the end of a quotation and quotations within quotations. (See: **Quote Markings (p. 1436)**)

Exodus 7:19

over their streams, over their canals, and over their pools, and over every reservoir of their water

This list is meant to expand on and reinforce the idea of all of the water in Egypt. You should translate the list in such a way that the locations of the blood are not limited to these specific places, but to imply universality. (See: **Merism (p.1397)**)

in all the land of

Alternate translation: [in every part of]

both in containers of wood and in containers of stone

This possessive show composition. Alternate translation: [and in containers made from wood and in containers made from stone] (See: **Possession (p.1425)**)

Exodus 7:20

in the river

If it would be helpful to your readers, the name of the river may be made explicit. Alternate translation: [in the Nile River] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of his servants

This means in their sight. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 7:21

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 7:22

the magicians of

See how you translated this term in 7:11. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

And the heart of Pharaoh was strong

Pharaoh's stubborn attitude is spoken of as if his **heart** were **strong**. If the **heart** is not the body part your culture uses to refer to a person's will, consider using whichever organ your culture would use for this image. This is a neutral statement (it does not say that anyone caused him to be stubborn as many others in this part of the narrative do). See how you translated this in Exodus 7:13. Alternate translation: [Pharaoh was still defiant] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

just as Yahweh had spoken

Because Yahweh's prediction precedes this event, some languages may need to place the reference to that prediction before the statement that it was fulfilled. See UST and how you translated this in 7:13, where the same sentence appears.

Exodus 7:23

And he did not set his heart even to this

This is an idiom meaning Pharaoh did not think about the meaning of the miracle he had just seen. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: [And he did not consider what even this meant] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Exodus 7:24

all the Egyptians

The word **all** here is a generalization that means “many.” At the least, the upper class would have sent their slaves to dig for them. However, it does indicate that all the Egyptians who wished to drink water had to dig or had to have dug for them. Alternate translation: [many of the Egyptians] (See: **Hyperbole (p.1371)**)

Exodus 7:25

And & were filled

A new scene begins here. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

And seven days were filled

This means seven days later. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

seven

Alternate translation: [7] (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

Exodus 8

Exodus 8 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

- v. 1–15: Second plague: frogs
- v. 16–19: Third plague (first that magicians cannot imitate): gnats
- v. 20–32: Fourth plague: flies

Translation Issues in This Chapter

- the exact insects in plagues 3–4 are not certain; translation teams will need to decide what insects they can use for each
- Pharaoh makes his own heart heavy, that is, he determines to be proud and resist Yahweh twice in this chapter
- the Israelites' sacrifices are spoken of as an abomination to the Egyptians, but it is not specified how or why that is

Lifting up the hand and staff:

In the next few chapters, God will instruct Moses or Aaron or both to raise his hand or staff or both hand and staff. The narrative will then record who will raise his hand or staff or both. The instruction and the action do not always match exactly. God may say raise your hand, and the narrative may say that Moses raised his staff. These are not conflicting reports. Translators should understand that the hand and the staff are always understood together. They are one unit, and they can both be mentioned, or they can be mentioned separately. In each case, Moses or Aaron raises his hand with the staff in it. This fact is merely expressed differently.

Exodus 8:1

Go

This begins a direct quote that continues until the end of 8:4. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1333)**)

Thus says Yahweh

This quotation formula is used to introduce commands from Yahweh. See Chapter 4 Introduction for more information.

Thus

Here, **Thus** begins a second-level quotation that continues until the end of 8:4. It should be marked in some manner that distinguishes it from the outer level. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1439)**)

Let & go

This begins a third-level quotation that continues until the end of 8:4. It should be marked in some manner that distinguishes it from the outer levels. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1439)**)

Exodus 8:2

to let go

What Pharaoh is to **let go** is not specified, but “my people” or “the Israelites” are the understood object. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: [to let the Israelites go] (See: **Ellipsis (p.1340)**)

behold

Here, **behold** is an interjection meant to focus the attention of the listener on what comes next, in this case a dire warning. Alternate translation: [look out]

Exodus 8:3

into your house and in the room of your bed and on your bed and into the house of your servants and among your people and in your ovens and in your kneading bowls

This long list means “everywhere in Egypt.” It is presented in this way for rhetorical effect, that is, to convince Pharaoh of how bad this plague will be so he will obey. You should translate the list in such a way that the frogs’ location is not limited to these specific places. The list should imply universality. (See: **Merism (p.1397)**)

Exodus 8:4

Up to three levels of quotes end at the end of this verse. Depending on how many levels you chose to mark as direct quotations, you should indicate them ending here with closing second-level (and third-level) quotation mark(s) or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the end of quotations and quotations within a quotation. There may be other quotations in this chapter; they will be marked by the same punctuation, but they will not have their own notes unless there is something unique about them. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1436)**)

Exodus 8:5

And Yahweh said to Moses, “Say to Aaron

It may be helpful to translate this first quotation indirectly to avoid having two levels of quotations in this verse. Alternate translation: [And Yahweh told Moses to say to Aaron] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1333)**)

Reach out your hand with your staff over the canals, over the streams, and over the pools, and cause the frogs to come up on the land of Egypt

This is a second-level direct quotation if you chose to make **Say to Aaron** a direct quotation. In that case, it may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with second-level opening and closing quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation inside a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1436)**)

your hand with your staff

See note in the Chapter 8 Introduction regarding the hand and staff.

over the canals, over the streams, and over the pools

This list is meant to convey the idea of all the water in Egypt where frogs might live. You should translate the list in such a way that the locations are not limited to these specific places. The list should imply universality. This is made clear in 8:6. (See: **Merism (p.1397)**)

Exodus 8:6

And Aaron reached out

It is implied that Moses told Yahweh's instructions to Aaron. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

his hand

It is implied that Aaron was holding his staff as instructed. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. See note in the Chapter 8 Introduction regarding the hand and staff. Alternate translation: [his hand holding his staff] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

And Aaron reached out his hand over the waters of

Aaron would not have been able to reach his hand over all the water in Egypt. He likely stretched his hand over some nearby portion of the Nile, symbolizing all the water of Egypt. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the meaning plainly. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1456)**)

and & came up

8:3 has specified from where the frogs will come. Here it is implied, but if it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

the frog

There were so many frogs that the text uses the collective singular. If that would be misunderstood in your language, you may simply use the plural, as in the UST. (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1304)**)

and the frog came up and covered the land of Egypt

This means that there were frogs everywhere in Egypt. The image is like that of a blanket smothering the entire country. (Or more directly, like one giant, nation-sized frog sitting on top of the entire land). If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 8:7

the magicians & with their magic

See how you translated these in 7:11. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 8:8

And Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron

Alternate translation: [Then Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron] or [And the king summoned Moses and Aaron]

And Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron, and he said

It is implied that Moses and Aaron came to Pharaoh between the time when he called them and when he spoke to them. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [And Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron, and after they came, he said] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

to Yahweh that he may take away the frogs from me and from my people

In some languages you may have to make the content of Pharaoh's prayer to Yahweh a direct quote. Note that this will make it a second-level quotation and you will need to mark it with second-level quotation markings if your language uses them. Alternate translation: [to Yahweh saying, 'Please take away the frogs from Pharaoh and from his people.'] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1333)**)

And I will let the people go, and they may sacrifice to Yahweh

This promise is conditional on the frogs going away. Use a natural form in your language for hypothetical situations. Alternate translation: [Once the frogs are gone, I will let the people go, and they may sacrifice to Yahweh] (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1375)**)

Exodus 8:9

Glorify yourself over me

Moses speaks with false humility here. He is ironically pointing out Pharaoh's powerlessness before Yahweh. Alternate translation: [You can choose] (See: **Irony (p.1388)**)

for you and for your servants and for your people, & from you and from your houses

These lists mean "for everyone" and "from everywhere" (in Egypt). This makes clear that Moses will ask for a complete end of the plague. You should translate the list in such a way that it does not convey limitation to these specifics but is understood to imply universality. (See: **Merism (p.1397)**)

Exodus 8:10

so that you will know that there is no one like Yahweh, our God

This knowledge is the goal of Yahweh's granting a respite from the frogs. In some languages you may need to place this at the end of 8:11, after Moses says the frogs will leave. Use a natural way in your language for indicating purpose. (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.1315)**)

our God

Here, **our** refers to the Israelites' God, excluding Pharaoh and the Egyptians. Your language may require you to mark these forms. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1349)**)

Exodus 8:11

from you and from your houses and from your servants and from your people

This list means “from everywhere and everyone” (in Egypt). This shows that the end of the plague will be as complete as was its extent. You should translate the list in such a way that it does not convey limitation to these specifics but is understood to imply universality. (See: **Merism (p.1397)**)

Exodus 8:12

he had set

Alternate translation: [Yahweh had set]

And Moses and Aaron went out

A minor scene shift occurs here. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

Exodus 8:13

from the houses, from the courts, and from the fields

This list means “from everywhere” (in Egypt). This makes clear that there was a complete end of the plague. You should translate the list in such a way that it does not convey limitation to these specifics but is understood to imply universality. (See: **Merism (p.1397)**)

Exodus 8:14

into many piles

Literally, the Hebrew says “piles piles.” Repetition is used in Hebrew to emphasize how many or how big the piles of frogs were.

Exodus 8:15

and he caused his heart to be heavy

Pharaoh's stubborn attitude is spoken of as if he made his own **heart heavy**. If the **heart** is not the body part your culture uses to refer to a person's will, consider using whichever organ your culture would use for this image. See how you translated this in Exodus 7:14, but note there that the state of Pharaoh's heart is reported, whereas here Pharaoh makes his own heart heavy. Alternate translation: [and Pharaoh determined to be defiant] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

just as Yahweh had said

Alternate translation: [just as Yahweh had said Pharaoh would do]

Exodus 8:16

And Yahweh said

A new scene begins here. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. This is the start of the third plague sequence. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

And Yahweh said to Moses, “Say to Aaron

Say to Aaron starts a direct quotation. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this by marking it with first-level quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation. However, it may be helpful to translate one of the parts as an indirect quotation so that you do not have to have two levels of quotations here. See the UST. Alternate translation: [And Yahweh told Moses to tell Aaron] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1333)**)

Stretch out your staff and strike

This is one action or motion, but it is described with the two verbs that occur throughout this section of plague judgment.

your staff

This refers to Aaron’s staff. See note in the Chapter 8 Introduction regarding the hand and staff.

lice

We do not know exactly what this word means. It is probably a tiny (as in dust-particle size), biting insect. You should choose a different insect here than the one in the next plague (8:21–31). (See: **Translate Unknowns (p. 1460)**)

Exodus 8:17

and Aaron stretched out his hand with his staff and he struck the dust of the ground

Again, this is one action or motion, but it is described with the two verbs, **stretched** and **struck**, that occur throughout this section of plague judgment. See how you translated it in the previous verse.

his hand with his staff

See note in the Chapter 8 Introduction regarding the hand and staff.

lice & lice

Again, we do not know what this term refers to for certain, so see how you translated it in 8:16. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

on man

Here **man** includes women and children. Alternate translation: [people] or [mankind] or [humans] See the UST. (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1465)**)

All the dust of the ground & in all the land of Egypt

This extraordinary statement with the repeated **all** is used to emphasize the extent and severity of the plague. If this would be unnatural in your language use a natural way to communicate that. (See: **Hyperbole (p.1371)**)

Exodus 8:18

the magicians & with their magic

See how you translated these in 7:11. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

lice, & lice

See how you translated this term in 8:16. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

on man

Here **man** includes women and children. Alternate translation: [people] or [mankind] or [humans] See UST. (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1465)**)

Exodus 8:19

the magicians

See how you translated this term in 7:11. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

It is the finger of God

The words “finger of God” represent the power of God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [This is the powerful work of God] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1456)**)

And the heart of Pharaoh was strong

Pharaoh’s stubborn attitude is spoken of as if his **heart** were **strong**. If the **heart** is not the body part your culture uses to refer to a person’s will, consider using whichever organ your culture would use for this image. See how you translated this in Exodus 7:13. This is a neutral statement (it does not say that anyone caused him to be stubborn as many others in this part of the narrative do). Alternate translation: [Pharaoh was still defiant] (See: **Metaphor (p. 1399)**)

to them

Here, **them** may refer to the magicians or to Aaron and Moses. Alternate translation: [to the magicians’ warning] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

just as Yahweh said

Some languages will need to place this before the thing that Yahweh predicted, as in the UST.

Exodus 8:20

and station yourself before the face of Pharaoh

Alternate translation: [and present yourself to Pharaoh]

And Yahweh said

A new scene begins here. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. This is the beginning of the fourth plague sequence. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

before the face of Pharaoh

Here, **face** means the presence of a person. (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Behold

Behold is used to draw attention to important information that is next. In some languages and translation styles, it will make the most sense to omit this, as in the UST. Alternate translation: [Listen carefully]

Thus says Yahweh

This phrase opens a direct quote that continues until the end of 8:23. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with an opening first-level quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the beginning of a quotation. However, you may also consider making the opening portion an indirect quote so that you do not have a quote inside of a quote for the next verses. Alternate translation: [that Yahweh says] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1333)**)

Thus says Yahweh

This quotation formula is used to introduce commands from Yahweh. See Chapter 4 Introduction for more information.

Let & go

This phrase opens a second-level direct quotation which continues until the end of 8:23, unless you made **thus says Yahweh** an indirect quotation. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this by marking it with second-level quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation within a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1436)**)

and they will serve me

This is the purpose of the people being let go. Use a natural way in your language for indicating purpose. Alternate translation: [so they can serve me] (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.1315)**)

Exodus 8:21

behold me

The expression **behold me!** is used to draw attention to important information that is next. Alternate translation: [Listen carefully]

the swarm & the swarm

Here, **the swarm** is a collective singular noun that refers to a great number of flying, biting insects traveling in a group. If your language does not use singular nouns in that way, you can use a different expression. Alternate translation: [swarms of flies] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1304)**)

the swarm & the swarm

Here, **the swarm** probably refers to the common large flies that bother humans and livestock. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

at you and at your servants and at your people and into your houses. & the houses of Egypt & and even the ground

This long list means “everywhere in Egypt.” It is presented in this way for rhetorical effect, that is, to convince Pharaoh of how bad this plague will be so he will obey. You should translate the list in such a way that the flies’ location is not limited to these specific places but is understood to imply universality. (See: **Merism (p.1397)**)

Exodus 8:22

so that the swarm will not be there

This is the goal of Yahweh treating the land of Goshen differently. Alternate translation: [by keeping the swarm from there] (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.1315)**)

the swarm

This is a collective singular noun that refers to a great number of swarming, biting insects. See how you translated this in 8:21. Alternate translation: [swarms of flies] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1304)**)

the swarm

These are probably the common large flies that bother humans and livestock. See how you translated this in 8:21 (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

in order that you may know that I am Yahweh in the middle of the land

This is the goal of treating the Israelites differently. In some languages you may need to put this phrase the beginning of the verse. Use a natural way in your language for indicating purpose. (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.1315)**)

I am Yahweh in the middle of the land

Here, **am** could be connecting **I** and **Yahweh** or it could be connecting **I, Yahweh** and **in the middle of the land**. Alternate translation: [I, Yahweh, am in the middle of the land]

Exodus 8:23

redemption

This is a noun derived from a verb meaning “to buy back.” Very broadly, it can mean “to save or rescue.” If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **redemption**, you can express the same idea in another way. See the next note regarding textual variants for more information. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

redemption

Many translations follow the Septuagint here, which uses the word “division.” A minor change to the Hebrew would also produce the word translated “treat differently” in the previous verse. Alternate translation: [a division] (See: **Textual Variants (p.1458)**)

my people

Yahweh’s people, that is, the Israelites. Alternate translation: [the Israelites]

your people

Pharaoh’s people, that is, the Egyptians. Alternate translation: [the Egyptians]

This sign will happen tomorrow

After this phrase, the three levels of direct quotations of Yahweh that started in 8:20 ends. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with closing first-level, second-level, and third-level quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the end of quotations. You may not have three levels if you made any level an indirect quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1436)**)

Exodus 8:24

And Yahweh did so

The UST supplies a brief sentence filling in the gap between Yahweh's command to Moses and the onset of the plague. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly to make the progression of events clear. Alternate translation: [Moses obeyed the instructions Yahweh gave him, and Pharaoh responded as Yahweh had said he would. And Yahweh did so] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

And Yahweh did so

There is a minor scene change here. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

a & swarm

There are probably the common large flies that bother humans and livestock. See how you translated this in 8:21 (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

and & came

Some languages may need to translate this as "going" rather than "coming." Alternate translation: [and ... went] (See: **Go and Come (p.1362)**)

to the house of Pharaoh and the houses of his servants

This means "to everyone everywhere" (in Egypt), as made explicit in the next statement. This makes clear that the insects were throughout the land. You should translate this in such a way that it does not convey limitation to these specifics but is understood to imply universality. (See: **Merism (p.1397)**)

The land was ruined from the face of the swarm

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. Alternate translation: [The swarms of flies devastated the land] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

from the face of the swarm

Here, **face** represents the presence of the insects. Alternate translation: [because the insects were everywhere] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 8:25

And & called

This happened during the plague. (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.1325)**)

to your God

Here, **your** is plural. It could refer either to Moses and Aaron or to the Israelites. If your language uses different forms of “you” depending on the number of people addressed, use a dual form (if you have one) if your team decides it means Moses and Aaron; otherwise use a plural form. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

Exodus 8:26

an abomination of the Egyptians & an abomination of the Egyptians

We do not know what about their sacrificing was an **abomination** to the Egyptians. The same term is used in Genesis 43:32 and 46:34 to describe the Egyptians' feelings about eating with Hebrews and about the Hebrew profession of shepherding, respectively. Translators should attempt to convey the strong negative feelings that would be provoked in the Egyptians without speculating as to the cause.

we will sacrifice & our God. & we would sacrifice & would they & stone us

Here, **we**, **our,** and **us** should all be translated as exclusive (if your language makes that distinction). Pharaoh and the Egyptians are not included. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1349)**)

and would they not stone us

Moses asks this question to show Pharaoh that the Egyptians would not allow the Israelites to worship Yahweh by making a sacrifice repugnant to them. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [they will certainly stone us!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1445)**)

before their eyes

The express **before their eyes** is a figurative way of saying "where they can see." If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [in their sight] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 8:27

We must travel & and we will sacrifice & our God, & to us

Here, **we**, **our,** and **us** should all be translated as exclusive (if your language makes that distinction). Pharaoh and his people are not included. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1349)**)

Exodus 8:28

you & your God & you & very far

If your language uses different forms of “you” depending on the number of people addressed, use a plural form here. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

you

Alternate translation: [the Israelites]

you & certainly & very far

In Hebrew, **far** is repeated to emphasize (with **not**) that they are absolutely not to go too far. If your language does not use repeating words like this, express the emphasis in another way. (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Exodus 8:29

Behold

Behold is a term meant to focus the attention of the listener on what the speaker is about to say. If there is not a good way to translate this term in your language, this term can be omitted from the translation. Alternate translation: [Know this]

the swarm

These are probably the common large flies that bother humans and livestock. See how you translated this in 8:21 (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

from Pharaoh, & Pharaoh

Moses may be using the third person to refer to Pharaoh to show respect, because the king appears to be relenting. If use of the third person is not a way of showing respect in your culture or is not a valid way of addressing an individual at all, you may need to change the form. Alternate translation: [from you ... you] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1351)**)

from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people

This list means “from everywhere and everyone” (in Egypt). This shows that the end of the plague will be as complete as its extent. You should translate the list in such a way that it does not convey limitation to these specifics but is understood to imply universality. (See: **Merism (p.1397)**)

may Pharaoh not continue to deceive in order to fail to let the people go

If this double negative would be misunderstood in your language, you could translate it as a positive statement. Alternate translation: [you must begin to deal truthfully with us and let our people go] (See: **Double Negatives (p. 1335)**)

Only may Pharaoh not continue to deceive

Alternate translation: [But you must not deceive us] or [But you must not lie to us]

Exodus 8:30

And Moses went out

There is a minor scene shift here. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

Exodus 8:31

the swarm

These are probably the common large flies that bother humans and livestock. See how you translated this in 8:21 (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people

This list means “from everyone and everywhere” (in Egypt). This makes clear that there was a complete end of the plague. You should translate the list in such a way that it does not convey limitation to these specifics but is understood to imply universality. (See: **Merism (p.1397)**)

Not one remained

This extreme statement emphasizes how thoroughly Yahweh removed the insects from the land. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language that emphasizes thoroughness or complete lack of the swarm. Alternate translation: [There was not a single one of these insects left in the whole land] (See: **Hyperbole (p.1371)**)

Exodus 8:32

And Pharaoh caused his heart to be heavy

Pharaoh's stubborn attitude is spoken of as if he made his own **heart heavy**. If the **heart** is not the body part your culture uses to refer to a person's will, consider using whichever organ your culture would use for this image. See how you translated this in 8:15. Alternate translation: [Pharaoh determined to be defiant] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 9

Exodus 9 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

- v. 1–7: Fifth plague (first that does not affect Israelites): disease kills livestock
- v. 8–12: Sixth plague: boils
- v. 13–35: Seventh plague: hail
- v. 27–35: Pharaoh seems to repent, but it does not last

Translation Issues in This Chapter

- animals are affected in both the fifth and seventh plagues, in the fifth, the word is specifically related to domestic animals (livestock) while the word used in the seventh is more general

Exodus 9:1

And Yahweh said

A new scene begins here. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. This is the beginning of the fifth plague sequence. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

to Moses

After this phrase, a direct quote begins that continues to the end of 9:4 and contains two additional levels of quotes. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with an opening first-level quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the beginning of a quotation. There may be other quotations in this chapter; they will be marked by the same punctuation, but they will not have their own notes unless there is something unique about them. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1436)**)

and speak to him: ‘Thus says Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews

You may want to translate the second-level quotation beginning with **Thus says Yahweh** as an indirect quotation in order to reduce the levels of quotations in this passage. Alternate translation: [and say to him that Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews, says] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1439)**)

Thus says Yahweh

This quotation formula is used to introduce commands from Yahweh. See Chapter 4 Introduction for more information.

my people

Alternate translation: [the Israelites]

Exodus 9:2

Surely if you are unwilling to let go, but are still holding on to them

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. If saying the same thing twice might be confusing for your readers, you can combine the phrases into one. Alternate translation: [If you continue refusing to let them go] (See: **Parallelism (p.1417)**)

Exodus 9:3

behold

The word **behold** is used to draw attention to surprising information that follows. Alternate translation: [look out]

The hand of Yahweh is about to be on your livestock

Here, **hand** represents Yahweh's power to afflict their animals with disease. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [Then the power of Yahweh will afflict your livestock] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

The hand of Yahweh

This is part of the reported speech that Yahweh wants Moses to say to Pharaoh. Therefore, you could change the third person **the hand of Yahweh** to first person if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [My hand] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1351)**)

on your livestock

While the word **your** here is not plural, the next verse shows that it refers to all the people of Egypt who owned cattle. If your language uses different forms of "you" depending on the number of people addressed, you may want to use a plural form here. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the cattle, and on the flock

This long list is meant to reinforce the universal effects of the coming plague. It is presented in this way for rhetorical effect, that is, to convince Pharaoh of how bad this plague will be so he will obey. You should translate the list in such a way that it is not limiting but is understood to imply universality. (See: **Merism (p.1397)**)

on the cattle, and on the flock

These (**cattle** and **flock**) are collective singular nouns which refer to groups of animals. If your language does not use singular nouns in that way, you can use a different expression. Alternate translation: [on your bulls and cows and on your sheep and goats] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1304)**)

heavy

Here the plague is spoken of as if it weighed a lot. This means it would be very bad. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [severe] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 9:4

Yahweh

This is part of the reported speech that Yahweh wants Moses to say to Pharaoh. Therefore, you could change the third person **Yahweh** to first person if it would be clearer in your language. You should do the same as you did in the previous verse. Alternate translation: [I] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1351)**)

Israel

Here, **Israel** refers to the Israelites. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [the Israelite people] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Israel

Here, **Israel** is used as a collective singular noun. If your language would not refer to a group of people in this way, you may need to translate it as plural. Alternate translation: [the Israelite people] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1304)**)

the livestock of Egypt

Here, **Egypt** refers to the Egyptians. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [the livestock of the Egyptian people] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

thing

Alternate translation: [animal]

from any of the sons of Israel

Alternate translation: [which belongs to any of the sons of Israel]

Exodus 9:5

And Yahweh set an appointment

Alternate translation: [And Yahweh made an appointed time]

saying

This marks the beginning of a direct quotation. It can be omitted in translation if your language does not use a similar form. However, in this sentence it is the only verb related to speech, so you may need to translate it similarly to the way the UST does.

Yahweh

Yahweh is speaking here. Therefore, you could change the third person **Yahweh** to first person if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [I, Yahweh,] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1351)**)

Exodus 9:6

And Yahweh did

It is implied that Moses went and spoke to Pharaoh as directed. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [Moses did as Yahweh had commanded. And Yahweh did] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

all of the livestock of

This is exaggerated to emphasize the seriousness of the event. There were still some animals alive that were afflicted by later plagues. However, it may be best to translate this with the word “all.” (See: **Hyperbole (p.1371)**)

Egypt

Here, **Egypt** refers to the Egyptians. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [the Egyptian peoples’] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

But from the livestock of the sons of Israel not one died

Here the author uses a figure of speech that expresses a strong positive meaning by using a negative word together with a word that is the opposite of the intended meaning. If this is confusing in your language, you can express the meaning positively. Alternate translation: [But every single one of the Israelites’ livestock lived] (See: **Litotes (p.1395)**)

Exodus 9:7

and, behold

Again, **behold** is used to draw attention to surprising information that follows. Alternate translation: [and listen]

not even one of the livestock of Israel had died

Here the author uses a figure of speech that expresses a strong positive meaning by using a negative word together with a word that is the opposite of the intended meaning. If this is confusing in your language, you can express the meaning positively. Alternate translation: [every single one of the Israelites' livestock was alive] (See: **Litotes (p.1395)**)

of Israel

Here, **Israel** refers to the Israelites. Alternate translation: [of the Israelites] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

of Israel

Here, **Israel** is a collective singular noun. If your language would not refer to a group of people in this way, you may need to translate it as plural. Alternate translation: [the Israelites] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1304)**)

But the heart of Pharaoh was heavy

Pharaoh's stubborn attitude is spoken of as if his **heart** were **heavy**. If the **heart** is not the body part your culture uses to refer to a person's will, consider using whichever organ your culture would use for this image. This is a neutral statement (it does not say that anyone caused him to be stubborn as many others in this part of the narrative do). See how you translated this in Exodus 7:14. Alternate translation: [But Pharaoh was defiant] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 9:8

And Yahweh said

A new scene begins here. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. This is the start of the sixth plague scene. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

to you & both your hands of

You and **your** refer to both Moses and Aaron. If your language uses different forms of "you" depending on the number of people addressed, use dual form (if you have one) or plural forms (if not) here. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

Take to you a fullness of both your hands of

Alternate translation: [Each of you fill both your hands with]

ash of a furnace

Alternate translation: [ash from a furnace] or [ash produced by a furnace]

ash of

Here, **ash** is singular. For some languages you may need to make it plural as in the UST. (See: **Collective Nouns (p. 1304)**)

toward heaven

Alternate translation: [toward the sky]

before the eyes of Pharaoh

The phrase **before the eyes of Pharaoh** means in his sight. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [in the sight of Pharaoh] or [so Pharaoh sees it] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 9:9

boils, bursting blisters

To have **boils** means to have a condition where the skin is red, hot, and painful, the skin breaks open, and puss and blood come out. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

man

Here, **man** includes women and children. Alternate translation: [people] or [mankind] or [humans] See UST. (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1465)**)

Exodus 9:10

ash of

Here, **ash** is singular. For some languages you may need to make it plural as in the UST. See how you translated this in the previous verse. (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1304)**)

ash of a furnace

Alternate translation: [ash from a furnace] or [ash produced by a furnace] See how you translated this in the previous verse.

and they stood before the face of Pharaoh

Here, **before the face of Pharaoh** means in Pharaoh's presence. Alternate translation: [and stood in Pharaoh's presence] or [and stood in the presence of Pharaoh] See how you translated a similar statement in the previous verse. (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

toward the heavens

Alternate translation: [toward the sky] See how you translated this in the previous verse.

boils, bursting blisters

To have **boils** means to have a condition where the skin is red, hot, and painful, the skin breaks open, and puss and blood come out. See how you translated this in the previous verse. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

on man

Here, **man** includes women and children. See how you translated this in the previous verse. (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1465)**)

Exodus 9:11

the magicians & on the magicians

See how you translated **magicians** in 7:11.

to stand before the face of Moses

Here, **before the face of** means in Moses' presence. Alternate translation: [to stand in Moses' presence] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

because of the face of the boils

Here, **the face of** means the presence of or perhaps pain from the boils. Alternate translation: [because of the boils] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

the boils, & boils

To have **boils** means to have a condition where the skin is red, hot, and painful, the skin breaks open, and puss and blood come out. See how you translated this in 9:9. However, this time only **boils** is used, without the description ("bursting blisters") that is in the previous two verses. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 9:12

But Yahweh strengthened the heart of Pharaoh

This phrase means that it was God who made him stubborn. His stubborn attitude is spoken of as if his **heart** were **strong**. If the **heart** is not the body part your culture uses to refer to a person's will, consider using whichever organ your culture would use for this image. See how you translated this in 4:21. Alternate translation: [But Yahweh caused Pharaoh to be stubborn] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 9:13

And Yahweh said to Moses

A new scene begins here. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. This is the beginning of the seventh plague sequence. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

and stand before the face of Pharaoh

Here, **before the face of** means in Pharaoh's presence. Alternate translation: [and stand in Pharaoh's presence] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

and say to him, 'Thus says Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews

After **and say to him**, a second-level quote begins which continues until the end of 9:19. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with an opening second-level quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the beginning of a quotation within a quotation. However, it may be useful to translate this short quote frame as an indirect quotation, as the UST does. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1333)**)

Thus says Yahweh

This quotation formula is used to introduce commands from Yahweh. See Chapter 4 Introduction for more information.

Exodus 9:14

For

Here it is implied that Pharaoh will again not let God's people go. **For** is expressing the result, that is, God's response to Pharaoh's disobedience to the command immediately preceding. You may need to insert this as in the UST or choose a contrastive conjunction. Alternate translation: [Otherwise,] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1320)**)

I am about to send all my plagues to your heart

Here, **to your heart** is a synecdoche that means that even Pharaoh will be hurt by the plagues. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [I am about to send all my plagues against you personally] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1456)**)

Exodus 9:15

For now I could have stretched out my hand and struck you and your people with a plague, and you would have been destroyed from the land

This verse presents two things that God could have done but did not do to the Egyptians. This is to set up the reason he gives in the next verse. Be sure that it is clear in your translation that these are hypothetical past events. See the note regarding Yahweh's stated goals in the next verse. Some languages may need to reverse the order of these verses to put Yahweh's goals before his non-action. Use the natural form in your language for expressing a hypothetical situation. (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1375)**)

I could have stretched out my hand and struck you

Here, **my hand** refers to God's power. Alternate translation: [I could have used my power to attack you] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

and struck you and your people with a plague

Here, **a plague** is spoken about as if it were something that could be used to hit someone. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and caused you and your people to suffer from a plague] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 9:16

However, for this reason I appointed you: in order to show you my power and in order to proclaim my name in all the earth

The statements from **to show** to the end of the verse are Yahweh's stated goals, and thus, his reasons for not yet destroying Egypt and Pharaoh. You will need to translate, **However, for this reason I appointed you: in order** in a way that connects with the previous verse in an action-goal manner. (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.1315)**)

and in order to proclaim my name in all the earth

Here, **my name** represents Yahweh's reputation. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [and so that people everywhere will know who I am] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 9:17

You are still exalting yourself against my people

Pharaoh's opposition to letting the Israelites go to worship Yahweh is spoken of as if he were raising himself up as a barrier to them. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [You are still blocking my people] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

You are & exalting yourself

Here, Pharaoh is both the subject and object of the sentence. Translate this in a way that conveys that (1) Pharaoh is making Pharaoh (himself) proud and (2) this is metaphorically expressed as Pharaoh making Pharaoh (himself) the obstacle in the Israelites' way to freedom (as discussed in the previous note.) (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p. 1442)**)

You are & exalting yourself

Here, **you** is Pharaoh.

against my people

Here, **my people** are the Israelites.

Exodus 9:18

Behold me

Alternate translation: [Pay attention to the important thing I am about to tell you]

at this time, which there has never been anything like

Alternate translation: [at this time. There has never been anything like this]

Exodus 9:19

send and bring to safety your livestock and all that is yours in the field

The form of address here is singular; Moses is speaking directly to Pharaoh. However, the next two verses make it clear that Pharaoh's servants heard and understood this warning to be for them as well. In this sense Pharaoh represents the Egyptians. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

and the hail will come down on

Alternate translation: [and the balls of ice will drop on]

every man

Here, **man** means humans and includes men, women, and children. Alternate translation: [everyone] or [anyone] (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1465)**)

and beast

Here, **and beast** includes domestic and wild animals.

and they will die

The people and animals **will die** because they will be fatally injured by the hail. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [and the hail will kill them] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

and they will die

Up to three levels of direct quotation (depending on your earlier decision about converting a level to an indirect quotation) end at the end of this verse. You should indicate that ending here with closing first-level, second-level, and third-level (if required) quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the end of quotations within quotations. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1436)**)

Exodus 9:20

The fearers of

As in some other occasions, Moses' conversation with Pharaoh is not recorded. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express the fact that he did as Yahweh instructed explicitly. See the UST. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

The fearers of the word of Yahweh from the servants of Pharaoh

Here, **the word of Yahweh** refers to Yahweh's warning, more broadly it means they believed that Yahweh would do what he threatened. Alternate translation: [Those of Pharaoh's servants who feared Yahweh's warning]

Exodus 9:21

but whoever did not set his heart to

Here, **set his heart** means he believed or thought something was true. If the **heart** is not the body part your culture uses to refer to a person's will, consider using whichever organ your culture would use for this image. Alternate translation: [but whoever did not respect] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

the word of Yahweh

Here, **the word of Yahweh** refers to Yahweh's warning, more broadly it means they did not believe that Yahweh would do what he threatened. Alternate translation: [Yahweh's warning] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 9:22

And Yahweh said

A minor scene shift occurs here and may need to be marked in a certain way in your language. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

your hand

See note in the Chapter 8 Introduction regarding the hand and staff.

man

Here, **man** includes women and children. See the UST. (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1465)**)

beast

Here, **beast** includes domestic and wild animals.

Exodus 9:23

his staff

See note in the Chapter 8 Introduction regarding the hand and staff.

Exodus 9:24

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 9:25

from man to beast

Here, **from man to beast** is a figure of speech used to emphasize the extent and severity of the hail. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [every living thing] (See: **Merism (p.1397)**)

from man

Here, **man** includes women and children. Alternate translation: [from people] or [from mankind] or [from humans] See UST. (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1465)**)

beast

Here, **beast** includes domestic and wild animals.

Exodus 9:26

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 9:27

And Pharaoh sent

A minor scene shift occurs here and may need to be marked in a certain way in your language. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

I have sinned

Some commentators suggest translating **sinned** more literally, that is “missed the mark,” because Pharaoh is probably not admitting a moral failure, but instead, admitting that he misjudged.

is righteous, & are guilty

Many commentators suggest that Pharaoh is using these terms in a narrow, legal sense and only referring to this instance. That is, he is saying something like “I have lost this round in court.” See UST.

and my people

Here, **my people** refers to the Egyptians.

Exodus 9:28

and you will not continue to stay

Here Pharaoh uses a figure of speech that expresses a strong positive meaning by using a negative word together with a word that is the opposite of the intended meaning. If this is confusing in your language, you can express the meaning positively. Alternate translation: [really, I will let you go] (See: **Litotes (p.1395)**)

Exodus 9:29

And Moses said to him

Alternate translation: [And Moses said to Pharaoh]

I will spread my palms to Yahweh

This symbolic gesture accompanies prayer. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly.
Alternate translation: [I will pray to Yahweh] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1454)**)

Exodus 9:30

But you and your servants

This phrase is shifted to the beginning of the sentence to mark focus on Pharaoh and his servants because, despite Yahweh demonstrating his power, they are not yet afraid of him. If your language has a form or discourse feature that draws contrastive focus to participants, use it here. (See: **Connect — Contrary to Fact Conditions (p.1310)**)

of the face of Yahweh

Here, **face** means presence or power. Alternate translation: [of Yahweh] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 9:31

This and the next verse give background information so that the destruction caused by the later plagues can be understood by the reader. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.1289)**)

And the flax & and the flax

Flax is a plant that produces fibers that can be made into linen cloth. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

was in ear

This means the seeds at the top of the barley stalk were developing but still green. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p. 1460)**)

was in bloom

Alternate translation: [was flowering]

Exodus 9:32

and the spelt

Spelt is a kind of wheat. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 9:33

and he spread his palms to Yahweh

This symbolic gesture accompanies prayer. See how you translated a similar phrase in Exodus 9:29. Alternate translation: [lifted up his hands toward Yahweh and prayed] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1454)**)

Exodus 9:34

and he caused his heart to be heavy

Pharaoh's stubborn attitude is spoken of as if he made his own **heart heavy**. This time his servants do the same. If the **heart** is not the body part your culture uses to refer to a person's will, consider using whichever organ your culture would use for this image. See how you translated this in 8:15. Alternate translation: [Pharaoh determined to be defiant] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

and he added to his sin

This statement is from the author's perspective. Therefore, unlike in 9:27, **sin** should be translated with the word your language uses for "sin."

and he caused his heart to be heavy, he and his servants

Alternate translation: [and he caused his heart to be heavy. His servants did also] or [and he caused his heart to be heavy. His servants did the same]

Exodus 9:35

And the heart of Pharaoh was strong

Pharaoh's stubborn attitude is spoken of as if his **heart** were **strong**. If the **heart** is not the body part your culture uses to refer to a person's will, consider using whichever organ your culture would use for this image. See how you translated this in Exodus 7:13. This is a neutral statement (it does not say that anyone caused him to be stubborn as many others in this part of the narrative do). Alternate translation: [Pharaoh was still defiant] (See: **Metaphor (p. 1399)**)

just as Yahweh had said by the hand of Moses

This is similar to 9:12. In this case, what Yahweh said is spoken of as if it were something that could be held in someone's hand. This means that Moses delivered a message from Yahweh that Pharaoh would be stubborn. It is not clear if this message was given to the Israelites or if this refers to Moses' statement to Pharaoh in 9:30. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [just as Yahweh had told Moses to say] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 10

Exodus 10 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

The text does not specify, but some time seems to have passed between chapters nine and ten (See: 9:31–32 and 10:5). - v. 1–20: Eighth plague: locusts - v. 16–20: Pharaoh seems to repent, but it does not last - v. 21–29: Ninth plague: darkness

Exodus 10:1

for I have made his heart and the heart of his servants heavy

This means God made Pharaoh and his servants stubborn. Their stubborn attitude is spoken of as if their **hearts** were **heavy.** If the **heart** is not the body part your culture uses to refer to a person's will, consider using whichever organ your culture would use for this image. See how you translated this in 4:21, but note that the metaphor is slightly different here. Alternate translation: [for I have caused Pharaoh and his servants to be stubborn] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 10:2

I toyed with Egypt

Alternate translation: [I mocked Egypt]

Exodus 10:3

and said to him

After this phrase, a direct quote begins that continues until near the end of 10:6. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with an opening first-level quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the beginning of a quotation. There may be other quotations in this chapter; they will be marked by the same punctuation, but they will not have their own notes unless there is something unique about them. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1436)**)

and said to him, “Thus says Yahweh, God of the Hebrews

It may be helpful to turn the introductory quotation into an indirect quotation so that you do not have to use quotes within quotes. Alternate translation: [and told him that Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews, said thus] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1333)**)

Thus says Yahweh

This quotation formula is used to introduce commands from Yahweh. See Chapter 4 Introduction for more information.

Until when will you refuse to be humble from my face

Here, **face** represents the presence of Yahweh. Particularly, it means the presence of his judgment (the plagues). Alternate translation: [Until when will you refuse to be humble when I judge you] or [Until when will you refuse to be humble before me] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 10:4

behold me

Here, **behold me** adds emphasis to what is said next. Alternate translation: [beware]

locust

Here, **locust** is a singular noun referring to the group as one. If your language does not use singular nouns in that way, you can use a different expression. Alternate translation: [locusts] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1304)**)

Exodus 10:5

And it will cover the sight of the land, and none will be able to see the land

These parallel statements have a similar meaning. They are used to emphasize the great number of locusts that are coming. If saying the same thing twice might be confusing for your readers, you can combine the phrases into one. (See: **Parallelism (p.1417)**)

And it will cover the sight of the land

Alternate translation: [And it will cover the land from sight]

And it will cover & And it will devour & And it will devour

Here the pronoun **it** agrees in number with the collective singular “locust” in the previous verse. Insects are often referred to without gender in English, but you will need to use whatever number, gender, or noun class is required in your language to agree with the word for “locust” that you used in the previous verse. See the UST. (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1304)**)

Exodus 10:6

from the day they came to be on the earth until this day

Here, **on the earth** could either mean “on the planet” or “on the land” (Egypt). Either way, the entire phrase is meant to emphasize an extremely long time, with the intended meaning being “never.” (See: **Hyperbole (p.1371)**)

And he turned around

10:3 says that Aaron came in to see the king with Moses. It is implied that he left with him as well. You may make this explicit if it would help your readers. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 10:7

Until when will this be a trap to us

Pharaoh's servants ask this question to show Pharaoh that he is stubbornly causing the destruction of Egypt. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [We must not let this man continue to cause trouble for us!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1445)**)

the men

Here, **men** may be literal or it may refer to the Israelites, including the women and children. In 10:10 the king rejects the idea of letting the women and children go, and in 10:11 he specifically says that the men can go. (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1465)**)

Do you not understand yet that Egypt has perished

Pharaoh's servants ask this question to bring Pharaoh to recognize what he refuses to see. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [You should realize that Egypt is destroyed!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1445)**)

that Egypt has perished

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. Alternate translation: [that these plagues have destroyed Egypt] or [that their God has destroyed Egypt] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 10:8

And Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh

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. Alternate translation: [And a servant brought Moses and Aaron back to Pharaoh] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Who and who

Alternate translation: [Who all]

Exodus 10:9

We shall go & We shall go

We means the Israelites and does not include Pharaoh or the Egyptians. Use an exclusive form here if your language has this distinction. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1349)**)

Exodus 10:10

May Yahweh be with you in the same way as I will let you and your children go

May Yahweh be with you is usually a blessing but is almost certainly not a blessing here. It likely means something like “It will take Yahweh’s power to make me let you and your children go,” or “May Yahweh be as favorable to you as I am to the idea of letting your children go.” Pharaoh is saying that it will take Yahweh to make him do what Moses wants, but he does not think that will happen. Alternate translation: [It will be clear that Yahweh is with you if I let you and your children go]

See, for evil is before your faces

The phrase **for evil is before your faces** could either be a warning from Pharaoh that Moses’ actions will lead to evil for the Israelites, or it could mean that Pharaoh thinks the Israelites plan something that he considers evil. **Faces** is a metonym for the whole person. Alternate translation: [I see that you plan evil] or [Be careful! Your actions will have bad consequences] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 10:11

the men

This interjection clarifies who may go. Alternate translation: [the leaders]

from the face of Pharaoh

Here, **face** represents the presence of Pharaoh. Alternate translation: [from his presence] (See: **Metonymy (p. 1405)**)

Exodus 10:12

And Yahweh said

There is a minor scene change here, which may need to be marked in a certain way in your language. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

your hand

See note in the Chapter 8 Introduction regarding the hand and staff.

with the locust

Locust is a collective singular noun referring to the group as one. See how you translated this in 10:4. Alternate translation: [locusts] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1304)**)

and let it rise up & and let it devour

Here, the pronoun **it** agrees in number with the collective singular “locust.” See how you translated this in 10:5 (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1304)**)

Exodus 10:13

his staff

See note in the Chapter 8 Introduction regarding the hand and staff.

an east wind

The wind blew from east to west.

the locust

See how you translated this in 10:4. Alternate translation: [locusts] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1304)**)

Exodus 10:14

the locust & locust

See how you translated this in 10:4. Alternate translation: [locusts] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1304)**)

Exodus 10:15

And it covered & And it devoured

Here the pronoun **it** agrees in number with the collective singular “locust.” See how you translated this in 10:5 (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1304)**)

And it covered the sight of all of the land

See how you translated this in 10:5.

And it devoured all of the plants of the land and all of the fruit of the trees that the hail had left. And not any of the greenery remained in a tree or in a plant of the field in all of the land of Egypt

These parallel statements reinforce one another. If saying the same thing twice might be confusing for your readers, you can combine the phrases into one. (See: **Parallelism (p.1417)**)

Exodus 10:16

your God and against you

Here, **you** and **your** are plural. These could refer either to Moses and Aaron or to all the Israelites. If your language uses different forms of "you" depending on the number of people addressed, use a plural form here. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

Exodus 10:17

bear

Alternate translation: [take away]

just this once, & only

Pharaoh could either be desperate and using **just this once ... only** to attempt to make his request as small as possible to increase the chances of it being granted, or he could be still too proud to admit guilt beyond this single incident (which is probably his bold statement about Yahweh being with the Israelites in 10:10). The former seems more likely given that he terms this plague "this death." If your culture has a way of making a request seem as small as possible, you may want to use it to translate Pharaoh's request.

your God

Here, **your** is plural. This could refer either to Moses and Aaron or to all the Israelites. If your language uses different forms of "you" depending on the number of people addressed, use a plural form here. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

this death

The word **death** here refers to the destruction by the locusts of all plants in Egypt, which would eventually lead to the deaths of people, because there would be no crops. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. See the UST. (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

this death

The word **death** here refers to the destruction by the locusts of all plants in Egypt, which would eventually lead to the deaths of people because there would be no crops. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [this destruction that will lead to our deaths] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 10:18

And he went out

Moses and Aaron were summoned to the king in 10:16, so some translations will need to say that they both left.

Exodus 10:19

a very strong sea wind

Alternate translation: [a very strong west wind] or [a very strong wind from the west]

and it carried away the locust

Alternate translation: [and it moved the locust upward]

the locust, & locust

See how you translated this in 10:4. Alternate translation: [the locusts ... of the locusts] (See: **Collective Nouns (p. 1304)**)

and it drove it

Here, the first **it** refers to the wind; the second **it** agrees in number with the collective singular “locust.” See how you translated this in 10:5 (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1304)**)

Exodus 10:20

And Yahweh strengthened the heart of Pharaoh

This means God made him stubborn. His stubborn attitude is spoken of as if his **heart** were **strong**. If the **heart** is not the body part your culture uses to refer to a person's will, consider using whichever organ your culture would use for this image. See how you translated this in 4:21. Alternate translation: [But Yahweh caused Pharaoh to be stubborn] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 10:21

And Yahweh said

A new scene begins here, which may need to be marked in a certain way in your language. This is the start of the third plague sequence. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

your hand

See note in the Chapter 8 Introduction regarding the hand and staff.

Egypt, and darkness will feel

This is a somewhat puzzling construction which describes the darkness. Most English translations take it as a passive, which restated actively means, “people will feel the darkness,” meaning metaphorically what is expressed in different ways in the UST and the alternate translation here. Another option is to view the Hebrew verb form as causative and translate as such: “and the darkness will cause people to feel,” meaning people will have to feel where they are going because they will not be able to see. A final option would be a personification of darkness such that the darkness gropes around, filling in every place in the land. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Egypt, an extremely oppressive darkness] (See: **Metaphor (p. 1399)**)

Exodus 10:22

his hand

See note in the Chapter 8 Introduction regarding the hand and staff.

for three

Alternate translation: [for 3] (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

Exodus 10:23

No man could see his brother

This phrase means that people could not see the people who lived closest to them, whether or not that person was literally their **brother**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [No one could see the people who lived with them] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

man & man

Here, **man** refers to any human in general. Alternate translation: [person] (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1465)**)

for three

Alternate translation: [for 3] (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

Exodus 10:24

Go serve & your flocks and your herds & your children & with you

Every instance of **you** and **your**, as well as the imperative verb forms in this verse, are plural. They refer to the Israelites. If your language uses different forms of “you” depending on the number of people addressed, use a plural form here. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

Exodus 10:25

Also you, you must give in our hands sacrifices and burnt offerings

The construction here is difficult. Based on context, Moses is probably not saying that Pharaoh needs to provide his own animals to the Israelites. He is asking Pharaoh to let the Israelites take their own animals with them. **Give in our hands** means to take with them, by whatever means, which may include holding a rope in the hand to lead the animals or any other means of herding the animals. See the UST. (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

sacrifices and burnt offerings

Here, **sacrifices and burnt offerings** refers to the animals of their flocks and herds that they must take. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [animals for sacrifices and burnt offerings] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

and we will do to Yahweh our God

Here, **do** means "do the sacrifices and burnt offerings." Alternate translation: [and we will make those sacrifices and burnt offerings to Yahweh our God]

in our hands & and we will do & our God

Here, **we** and **us** refers to the Israelites (same group as the speaker's) while excluding Pharaoh and the Egyptians (listeners' group). If your language distinguishes between forms of we and us based on who is included, be sure to use the one appropriate to the described group. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1349)**)

Exodus 10:26

our livestock & with us. & we shall take & our God. And as for us, we will & know & we must serve & we arrive

Here, **we, our,** and **us** each refers to the Israelites (same group as the speaker's) while excluding Pharaoh and the Egyptians (listeners' group). If your language distinguishes between forms of we, our, and us based on who is included, be sure to use the one appropriate to the described group. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.1349)**)

Not a hoof shall be left behind

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [We cannot leave behind a single animal] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

a hoof

Here the word **hoof** refers to the entire animal. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [a single animal] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1456)**)

there

The destination is unspecified. Previous context suggests it would be at the mountain of God (See: 3:1, especially 3:12, and 4:27), which would take three days of travel to reach (See: 3:18 and 5:3).

Exodus 10:27

And Yahweh strengthened the heart of Pharaoh

This means God made him stubborn. His stubborn attitude is spoken of as if his **heart** were **strong**. If the **heart** is not the body part your culture uses to refer to a person's will, consider using whichever organ your culture would use for this image. See how you translated this in 4:21. Alternate translation: [But Yahweh caused Pharaoh to be stubborn] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

and he would not agree to let them go

Alternate translation: [and Pharaoh would not consent to let them go]

Exodus 10:28

Watch yourself

Here, the listener, Moses, is both the subject and object of the sentence. He is the person told to look (subject) and he himself is what he is told to look at (object). Different languages have different methods of marking this. Alternate translation: [You watch yourself] (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p.1442)**)

Watch yourself

This is an idiom. Pharaoh is not telling Moses literally to keep looking at himself. Alternate translation: [Be careful] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

you shall die

Pharaoh means he will have Moses killed. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

my face; & my face

Here, **face** refers to the whole person. See the UST. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1456)**)

Exodus 10:29

Just as you say

With these words, Moses emphasizes that Pharaoh has spoken the truth. Alternate translation: [What you have said is true] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

your face

Here, **face** refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: [you] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1456)**)

Exodus 11

Exodus 11 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

Chapter 11 is a transition point in the book. The previous nine plagues (in their three sequences of three) have come to an end and the last plague, the death of the firstborn, is about to occur, along with the Passover and the Exodus itself. It is difficult to know if the events in chapter 11 all are recorded in the order in which they happened. For translation, you should follow the order of the text if it will not confuse your readers.

It may be helpful to think that after the end of chapter 10, Yahweh spoke to Moses immediately, before he actually left Pharaoh's presence (11:1–2). 11:3 is a comment suggesting that the Egyptians will be willing to do as the Israelites are told to ask them to do in v. 2. In verses 11:4–7 Moses gives Pharaoh and his officials a message from Yahweh that Yahweh is giving to Moses right at that moment. At the end of v. 8 Moses leaves Pharaoh's presence (completing the interaction from the end of ch. 10). 11:9 may either be Yahweh telling Moses what is going to happen, or it could be part of the summary that occurs in v. 10. Verse 10 summarizes what has happened in chapters 5–10 (especially the plagues in chapters 7–10) in preparation for the great last plague.

Exodus 11:1

to Moses

After this phrase, a direct quote begins that continues until the end of 11:2. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with an opening first-level quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the beginning of a quotation. There may be other quotations in this chapter; they will be marked by the same punctuation, but they will not have their own notes unless there is something unique about them. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1436)**)

As soon as he lets go, he will & drive & away

These verbs (**lets go** and **drive away**) are meant to immediately follow one another. When you translate, make sure they are almost simultaneous in time; the letting go happens and then immediately the driving away happens. (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1323)**)

he will certainly drive & completely away

The wording here is very forceful. Use strong words, forms, or phrasing when you are translating.

you & you

Each occurrence of the word **you** in this verse is plural and refers to Moses and the rest of the Israelites. If your language uses different forms of “you” depending on the number of people addressed, use a plural form here. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

Exodus 11:2

now

Here, **now** conveys urgency, indicating that Moses should speak soon, without delaying for other things. If you have a way of giving a command that shows that it is important for someone to do it quickly, it would be better to translate in that way than in a way that means “now” in a time sense (versus earlier or later).

in the ears of the people

Alternate translation: [so the people hear you] or [when all the people are listening]

items of silver and items of gold

These could be any sort of thing made from silver or gold (for instance: utensils, cups, pitchers, plates, candleholders), not just jewelry.

and let them ask, a man from his neighbor and a woman from her neighbor, items of silver and items of gold

Exodus 3:22 contains similar instructions; see how you translated there.

Exodus 11:3

And Yahweh gave the people favor in the eyes of the Egyptians. Furthermore, the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the eyes of the servants of Pharaoh and in the eyes of the people

In this verse the author interjects a comment about the situation. Some translations choose to put the verse in parenthesis to indicate this. You may mark it in a way that is natural to your language. (See: **Aside (p.1283)**)

the people favor in the eyes of the Egyptians

Here, **in the eyes of the Egyptians** is an idiom for the Egyptian's feelings or opinion. **Favor** means those feelings are positive. Taken together, this means that when the Egyptians see the Israelites leaving Egypt, they will gladly help them. (Because the Egyptians have suffered under God's judgment, the Egyptians want so badly to see them leave). If your language has the same or a similar idiom, you can translate or use it. Otherwise, you can translate the meaning. See how you translated this in 3:21. (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

in the eyes of the servants of Pharaoh and in the eyes of the people

Here, **in the eyes of the servants of Pharaoh and in the eyes of the people** is an idiom for their feelings or opinions. If your language has the same or a similar idiom, you can translate or use it. Otherwise, you can translate the meaning. See how you translated a similar idiom in 3:21. (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

And Yahweh gave the people favor in the eyes of the Egyptians

Exodus 3:21 contains a related phrase; see how you translated it there.

Exodus 11:4

Thus says Yahweh

This quotation formula is used to introduce commands from Yahweh. See Chapter 4 Introduction for more information.

Exodus 11:5

firstborn & from the firstborn of & the firstborn of & firstborn of

The “firstborn” always refers to the oldest male offspring.

from the firstborn of Pharaoh, who sits on his throne, to the firstborn of the slave girl who is behind the mill, and every firstborn of a beast

This is a merism. First, two extremes are mentioned: the highest of society (**Pharaoh, who sits on his throne**) and the lowest (**the slave girl who is behind the mill**). Then the animals (**beasts**) are added making it a three-item list of parts of society and even the economy to show the totality of the coming judgment. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. (See: **Merism (p.1397)**)

who is behind the mill

Alternate translation: [who is grinding at the handmill] or [who is behind the handmill grinding grain]

Exodus 11:6

which nothing like it has ever happened, and nothing like it will happen again

This phrase uses the extremes of past and future to emphasize the concept of “never.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [such as has never been and never will be] (See: **Merism (p.1397)**)

Exodus 11:7

will not sharpen his tongue

This means to make an unfriendly noise. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: [will not growl] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

you will know

Here, **you** is plural. If your language uses different forms of “you” depending on the number of people addressed, use a plural form here. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

that Yahweh distinguishes between Egypt and between Israel

See how you translated a similar phrase in Exodus 9:4.

Exodus 11:8

and they will bow to me

This does not mean to bow for worshiping. **They will bow to** Moses to beg him to leave. They will do this to show how desperate they will be for Moses and the Israelites to go. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1454)**)

and they will bow to me

They will bow to Moses to beg him to leave. They will do this to show how desperate they will be for Moses and the Israelites to go. If this action would not mean the same thing in your culture, you may need to make the reason they are bowing explicit. Alternate translation: [and they will bow down to me to beg] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

and all the people who are at your feet

Here, the people are pictured as below Moses, which means they are his followers. The reference to **feet** also can mean they go the same place he goes, again, meaning “follower.” If your language uses a similar image to mean follower, you can translate the image; if not, you may use another image from your culture or translate the meaning. Alternate translation: [and all the people who are following you] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

And after that I will go out

This means that Moses and the Israelites will leave Egypt. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [After that I will leave here] or [After that I will go out from Egypt] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

with burning of the nose

This is an idiom meaning that Moses is angry. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: [enraged] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Exodus 11:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 11:10

And Moses and Aaron did all these miracles before the face of Pharaoh. But Yahweh strengthened the heart of Pharaoh, and he did not let the sons of Israel go from his land

This verse is summarizing and wrapping up the story of the plagues. If your language has a way of summarizing information at the end of a story, try to translate this verse (and possibly verse 9—see the introductory notes to this chapter) in this way. (See: **End of Story (p.1343)**)

But Yahweh strengthened the heart of Pharaoh

This means God made him stubborn. His stubborn attitude is spoken of as if his **heart** were **strong**. If the **heart** is not the body part your culture uses to refer to a person's will, consider using whichever organ your culture would use for this image. See how you translated this in 4:21. Alternate translation: [But Yahweh caused Pharaoh to be stubborn] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 12

Exodus 12 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

The events of this chapter are known as the Passover. They are remembered in the celebration of Passover. (See: **Passover (p.1482)**) 1. Instruction v. 1–28 * v. 1–20: Yahweh gives instructions * v. 1–11: how to eat this Passover * v. 12–13: description of the plague * v. 14–20: directions for future celebration of Passover * v. 21–28: Moses repeats Yahweh's instructions to Israelites 2. Narrative v. 29–42: Passover and Exodus 3. Instruction v. 43–49: which foreigners may eat Passover 4. Summary Narrative v. 50–51

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Unleavened bread

The concept of unleavened bread is introduced in this chapter. Its significance stems from its connection to the events in this chapter. (See: **unleavened bread (p.1489)**)

Ethnic segregation

The Hebrew people were to be separate from the rest of the world. Because of this, they separated themselves from other people groups. At this time, these foreigners were looked upon as unholy. (See: **holy, holiness, unholy, sacred (p.1478)**)

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Passover

Pronoun usage

In the long quotation (verses 3–20) that Yahweh tells Moses and Aaron to convey to the Israelites, he speaks of them in the third person ("they must") in 12:3–4 and 12:7–8 and to them in the second person ("you must") for all the rest of the instruction. Some languages may need to keep the pronoun person consistent throughout the quotation.

You plural

In this chapter, almost every occurrence of "you" or "your" is plural. Each one refers to all the Israelites. Those that are not will be marked. If your language uses different forms of "you" depending on the number of people addressed, use a plural form throughout unless otherwise noted. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

Exodus 12:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 12:2

This month is to you the head of the months

The start of this verse is the beginning of a direct quote which continues until the end of 12:20. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with an opening first-level quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the beginning of a quotation. There may be other quotations in this chapter; they will be marked by the same punctuation, but they will not have their own notes unless there is something unique about them. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1436)**)

This month is to you the head of the months. It is the first to you of the months of the year

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize that the month in which the events of this chapter take place will be the beginning of their calendar year. (See: **Parallelism (p.1417)**)

It is the first to you of the months of the year

The first month of the Hebrew calendar includes the last part of March and the first part of April on Western calendars. It marks when Yahweh rescued the Israelites from the Egyptians. You could convert the Hebrew day and month into an approximate date on the calendar that your culture uses. However, the Jews used a lunar calendar, so if you use a solar calendar, the date will be different every year and the translation will not be entirely accurate. So you may just want to give the number of the day and the name of the month on the Hebrew calendar, and say approximately what time of year that is on your calendar in a footnote. (See: **Hebrew Months (p.1364)**)

Exodus 12:3

Speak

The command here is to both Moses and Aaron. If your language uses a different form if two are people addressed, use a dual form here. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

they shall take to themselves, each man, a lamb to the house of the fathers: a lamb to a house

This seems to be indicating that if multiple families live in one house, the man who is the leader of the family group that lives there should take one lamb for that whole household. Alternate translation: [the father of each household must take a lamb for his household, one per household]

a lamb to a house

Alternate translation: [one lamb per house]

a lamb & a lamb

The word **lamb** literally means "of the flock," and it could also be translated as a sheep or a goat. Here, the ULT uses **lamb** (a young sheep), because 12:5 specifies that it must be one year old. "Kid" (a young goat) would be equally valid as verse 5 also says that it could be either a sheep or a goat. You may translate it as either sheep or goat, whichever would be most familiar.

Exodus 12:4

And if the household is too few for having a lamb

This means that there are not enough people in the family to eat an entire lamb. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [If there are not enough people in the household to eat an entire lamb] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

and his neighbor near to his house by the number of people

The phrase **by the number of people** helps to clarify which sort of **neighbor near to his house** the Israelite should choose. They should count their own household and another household and try to have a group that is the right number to eat an entire lamb. Alternate translation: [and his neighbor who lives near him and whose family is the right size to share a lamb with]

each man

Here **man** refers to each person, whether man, woman, or child. Alternate translation: [each family member] (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1465)**)

Exodus 12:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 12:6

between the evenings

This refers to the time of evening after the sun has set but while there is still some light.

Exodus 12:7

on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses

Alternate translation: [on the sides and top of the way into the house] or [on the top and sides of the frame around the door into the house]

Exodus 12:8

bitter herbs

These are edible but strong-tasting leaves, seeds, and other parts of plants.

Exodus 12:9

You shall not eat from it raw

Alternate translation: [Do not eat the lamb or goat uncooked]

Exodus 12:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 12:11

belts fastened

Here, **belts** are strips of leather or fabric for tying around the waist.

And you shall eat it with haste

Alternate translation: [And you must eat it quickly]

It is the Passover to Yahweh

It refers to eating the animal on the tenth day of the month. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [This observance is Yahweh's Passover] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 12:12

And I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **judgment**, you can express the same idea in another way. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

Exodus 12:13

for destruction

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **destruction**, you can express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [to destroy you] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

and the plague will not be on you

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [and I will not put the plague on you] (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1280)**)

on the land of Egypt

Yahweh is going to strike the people and animals who live in **the land of Egypt**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [on everything living in the land of Egypt] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 12:14

And this day shall become

Verses 14-20 are instructions for the Israelites' future celebration of the Passover. If your language makes a distinction between near and far future events or between near and general commands, you may need to make clear that these verses primarily have a later application.

this day

Here, **this day** means the tenth day of the first month of every year. On this day every year, they must celebrate the Passover. (See: **Hebrew Months (p.1364)**)

Exodus 12:15

Yes

Alternate translation: [Surely] or [Indeed]

that person shall be cut off from Israel

The metaphor **cut off** could mean: (1) the person must leave. Alternate translation: [he must be sent away]; (2) the person is no longer an Israelite. Alternate translation: [he will no longer be considered to be one of the people of Israel]; (3) the person must die. Alternate translation: [he must be killed] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

that person shall be cut off from Israel

As noted in the previous note, the metaphor **cut off** has at least three possible meanings. By whom that person will be cut off is not specified; it could be the Israelites or Yahweh. If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. The following alternate translations express those: (1) “the people of Israel must send him away” or (2) “I will no longer consider him to be one of the people of Israel” or (3) “the people of Israel must kill him” (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

from Israel

Israel is a collective noun referring to the nation or people group. If your language does not use singular nouns in that way, you can use a different expression. Alternate translation: [from the Israelites] (See: **Collective Nouns (p. 1304)**)

Exodus 12:16

And on the first day an assembly of holiness, and on the seventh day an assembly of holiness shall be for you

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [And on the first day and on the seventh day, you shall have an assembly of holiness] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

an assembly of holiness, & an assembly of holiness

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **holiness**, you can express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [a holy assembly ... a holy assembly] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

And on the first day & and on the seventh day

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use cardinal numbers here. Alternate translation: [And on day one of the month ... and on day seven of the month] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1414)**)

All work shall not be done in these

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [You will do no work on these days] (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1280)**)

that alone may be done by you

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [which must be the only work that you do] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 12:17

your hosts

The term **hosts** refers to a large group of people, often organized into groups for war. See how you translated this in Exodus 6:26. Alternate translation: [your groups] or [your divisions] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 12:18

In the first month, on the fourteenth day & until the twenty-first day of the month

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use cardinal numbers here. Alternate translation: [In month one, on day fourteen ... until day twenty-one of the month] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1414)**)

In the first month, on the fourteenth day & until the twenty-first day of the month

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use cardinal numbers here. (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p. 1414)**)

In the first month, on the fourteenth day

This is the first month of the Hebrew calendar. The fourteenth day is near the beginning of April on Western calendars. You could convert the Hebrew day and month into an approximate date on the calendar that your culture uses. However, the Jews used a lunar calendar, so if you use a solar calendar, the date will be different every year and the translation will not be entirely accurate. So you may just want to give the number of the day and the name of the month on the Hebrew calendar, and say approximately what time of year that is on your calendar in a footnote. (See: **Hebrew Months (p.1364)**)

the twenty-first day of the month

This is near the middle of April on Western calendars. You could convert the Hebrew day and month into an approximate date on the calendar that your culture uses. However, the Jews used a lunar calendar, so if you use a solar calendar, the date will be different every year and the translation will not be entirely accurate. So you may just want to give the number of the day and the name of the month on the Hebrew calendar, and say approximately what time of year that is on your calendar in a footnote. (See: **Hebrew Months (p.1364)**)

Exodus 12:19

no yeast shall be found in your houses

This means there should not be any yeast in their houses. If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Note that the UST more accurately conveys the meaning here, as the alternate translation in this note could be understood to mean that you must simply hide the yeast very well. Alternate translation: [Yahweh must not find any yeast in your houses] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

that person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel

See how you translated **cut off** in Exodus 12:15. (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

that person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel

See how you translated **cut off** in Exodus 12:15. (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 12:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 12:21

A new scene begins at this verse, which may need to be marked in a certain way in your language. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

Exodus 12:22

a bunch of hyssop

Hyssop is a woody plant with small leaves that can be used for sprinkling liquids by dipping the leaves in the liquid and then shaking them or brushing them over the target. If this plant is unknown, you can use a descriptor phrase. Alternate translation: [part of a plant with small branches and many leaves] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

to the lintel and to both the doorposts

Alternate translation: [on the sides and top of the way into the house.] See how you translated a similar phrase in Exodus 12:7.

not a man

Here, **man** includes women and children. Alternate translation: [no person] (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1465)**)

Exodus 12:23

and Yahweh will pass over the door

Here the word **door** implies the entire house. This means that God will spare the Israelites in houses with blood on the door frames. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and Yahweh will pass over the house] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1456)**)

on the lintel and on the two doorposts

Alternate translation: [on the sides and top of the way into the house] See how you translated a similar phrase in Exodus 12:7.

Exodus 12:24

this thing

These words refer to the Passover or Festival of Unleavened Bread. Observing the Passover was an act of worshiping Yahweh.

for you and for your sons

Here, **you** and **your** are singular but they refer to the whole nation. If the singular form would not be natural in your language for someone who was speaking to a group of people, you could use the plural forms of “you” in your translation. (See: **Singular Pronouns that refer to Groups (p.1452)**)

and for your sons

Here, **sons** includes everyone. (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1465)**)

Exodus 12:25

this service

Here, **this service** refers to the Passover or Festival of Unleavened Bread. Observing the Passover was an act of worshiping Yahweh.

Exodus 12:26

your sons

Here, **your sons** refers to all children, as in the UST. (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1465)**)

to you, ‘What is this service to you

After **you**, a second-level quotation begins. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with second-level quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation within a quotation. However, you may want to translate this as an indirect quotation in order to reduce the layers of quotations in this passage. Alternate translation: [to you what this ritual means to you,] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1439)**)

Exodus 12:27

And he rescued our households

This means that Yahweh spared the Israelites' firstborn sons. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [He did not kill the firstborn sons in our houses] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 12:28

as Yahweh had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did

Alternate translation: [everything that Yahweh told Moses and Aaron to do]

Exodus 12:29

The next few verses are the climax of this part of Exodus. A number of literary features mark it out. First, it is specially introduced with **and so it happened,** which is used to mark major breaks in the narrative. Second, it uses repetition: **firstborn** is repeated four times in verse 29 so that the reader cannot possibly miss what is happening. **Night** is repeated in verse 29, 30, and 31. **Got up/get up** is repeated in verse 30 and 31. In verses 31 and 32 "also" occurs five times (it is translated as "both" once in the ULT). Third, the places of both **Pharaoh** and **the captive** are elaborated on to slow the pace and create a vivid mental image for the reader. In verse 30 there is the listing of sorts of people who got up; note the use of the double negative for emphasis. Your translation should attempt to use the same or similar literary features of your own language that slow down the pace, create vivid imagery, and emphasize that this is a climax point.

from the firstborn of Pharaoh sitting on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the house of the pit, and all the firstborn of beasts

This phrase indicates that there was no person or household excluded from Yahweh's judgment. It both speaks of extreme parts of society and then makes this into a list by including the animals. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on the throne and the firstborn of the captive who was in the house of the pit and the firstborn of everyone in between was struck; even all the firstborn of the beasts were struck] (See: **Merism (p.1397)**)

the firstborn & from the firstborn of & the firstborn of & the firstborn of

In these usages, **firstborn** always refers to the oldest male offspring. See how you translated a similar phrase in Exodus 11:5.

to the firstborn of the captive who was in the house of the pit

Alternate translation: [to the firstborn of people in the house of the pit] This refers to prisoners in general and not to a specific person in prison.

Exodus 12:30

for there was not a house where there was not someone dead

If this double negative would be misunderstood in your language, you could translate it as a positive statement. Alternate translation: [because someone was dead in every house] (See: **Double Negatives (p.1335)**)

Exodus 12:31

you & as you have said

Here, Pharaoh speaking is to both Moses and Aaron. If your language uses a different form if two are people addressed, use a dual form here. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

Exodus 12:32

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 12:33

We are all dying

The Egyptians were afraid that they would die if the Israelites did not leave Egypt. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [We will all die if you do not leave] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 12:34

Their kneading bowls were wrapped in their clothes on their shoulders

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [They tied up their bread-making bowls in their clothes and placed them on their shoulders] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 12:35

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 12:36

the people favor in the eyes of the Egyptians

Here, **in the eyes of the Egyptians** is an idiom for the Egyptian's feelings or opinion. **Favor** means that those feelings are positive. Taken together, this means that when the Egyptians saw the Israelites leaving Egypt, they gladly helped them (because they wanted them to leave so badly due to the Egyptians suffering under God's judgment). If your language has the same or a similar idiom, you can translate or use it. Otherwise, you can translate the meaning. See how you translated this in 3:21. (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Exodus 12:37

from Rameses

Rameses was a major Egyptian city where grain was stored. See how you translated this in Exodus 1:11. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

about 600,000

Alternate translation: [about six hundred thousand] (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

Exodus 12:38

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 12:39

because they were driven out of Egypt

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [because the Egyptians had driven them out of Egypt] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 12:40

430

Alternate translation: [four hundred thirty] (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

Exodus 12:41

430

Alternate translation: [four hundred thirty] (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

the hosts of

The term **hosts** refers to a large group of people, often organized into groups for war. See how you translated this in Exodus 6:26. Alternate translation: [your groups] or [your divisions] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 12:42

for all the sons of Israel to observe for Yahweh throughout their generations

Alternate translation: [for all the sons of Israel throughout their generations to observe for Yahweh]

Exodus 12:43

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 12:44

But any slave of a man

Alternate translation: [But any slave of an Israelite]

if you circumcised him, then

This is a hypothetical situation. You will need to use whatever form your language uses to mark something as potentially true. (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1318)**)

if you circumcised

Here **you** is singular. It refers to a specific man and his slave. It might make more sense to use the third person here. Alternate translation: [if he circumcised] (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1356)**)

Exodus 12:45

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 12:46

It shall be eaten in one house

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [You must eat it in one house] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

You shall not bring

Here, **you** is singular, however it is used to address a crowd. If the singular form would not be natural in your language for someone who was speaking to a group of people, you could use the plural forms of “you” in your translation. (See: **Singular Pronouns that refer to Groups (p.1452)**)

Exodus 12:47

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 12:48

And if a sojourner is sojourning with you, and keeps the Passover to Yahweh

This is a two-part hypothetical situation. It describes the circumstance and desire of the sojourner; the next portion says what he must do. You will need to use whatever form your language uses to mark something as potentially true. (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1318)**)

with you

Here, **you** is singular, however it is used to address a crowd. If the singular form would not be natural in your language for someone who was speaking to a group of people, you could use the plural forms of “you” in your translation. (See: **Singular Pronouns that refer to Groups (p.1452)**)

all his males shall be circumcised

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [someone must circumcise all males in his household] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

all his males shall be circumcised. And then he may draw near to keep it

The sojourner will be circumcised in order to **draw near to keep** the Passover. Some languages may need to place the purpose clause first. Alternate translation: [in order draw near to keep it all his males must be circumcised] (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.1315)**)

like a native of the land

Here, **land** refers to Canaan—which is the land that the Israelites will soon live in. The expression **a native of the land** means a person who is a native Israelite. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [those who are Israelites by birth] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

And any uncircumcised person shall not eat it

If this double negative would be misunderstood in your language, you could translate it as a positive statement. Alternate translation: [And only a circumcised person may eat it] (See: **Double Negatives (p.1335)**)

Exodus 12:49

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 12:50

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 12:51

And so it was, in that very day

This phrase is used here to mark an important event in the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

their hosts

The term **hosts** refers to a large group of people often organized into groups for war. See how you translated this in Exodus 6:26. Alternate translation: [your groups] or [your divisions] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 13

Exodus 13 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

Instruction

- v. 1–2: First mention of setting apart the firstborn
- v. 3–10: Reiteration of the Passover instructions from 12:14–20 and 24–27, with a focus on telling to Yahweh's deeds to the future generations of Israelites
- v. 11–13: More details on setting apart the firstborn
- v. 14–16: Reiteration of purpose: telling to future generations

Narrative

- v. 17–22: Some details of the exodus

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

- There are several concepts that will be important to understand and translate with care (some have already been encountered in Exodus). They are: set apart, sign, symbol, redemption, and sacrifice.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

- There are a number of names of people groups and places in this chapter. However, many have been translated in earlier passages.
- Transporting the bones of Joseph may be an unknown concept in some places.
- It may take some time to decide on a good translation for the pillars of fire and cloud that lead the Israelites.

Exodus 13:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 13:2

Set apart to me all the firstborn, openers of every womb among the sons of Israel, among man and among beast; he is mine

This entire verse is a direct quotation. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this by marking it with first-level quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation. There may be other quotations in this chapter; they will be marked by the same punctuation, but they will not have their own notes unless there is something unique about them. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1436)**)

Exodus 13:3

from the house of slavery

Moses speaks of Egypt as if it were a house where people keep slaves. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the place where you were slaves] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

by a strong hand

Here, **hand** refers to power. See how you translated “strong hand” in Exodus 6:1. (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

And no yeast may be eaten

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language, as in the UST. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 13:4

Aviv

This is the name of the first month of the Hebrew calendar. Aviv is during the last part of March and the first part of April on Western calendars. You could convert the Hebrew day and month into an approximate date on the calendar that your culture uses. However, the Jews used a lunar calendar, so if you use a solar calendar, the date will be different every year and the translation will not be entirely accurate. So you may just want to give the number of the day and the name of the month on the Hebrew calendar, and say approximately what time of year that is on your calendar in a footnote. (See: **Hebrew Months (p.1364)**)

Exodus 13:5

And it will be that Yahweh will bring you to the land of & and you shall serve this service in this month

When the Israelites live in Canaan, they must celebrate the Passover on this day each year. See how you translated a similar phrase in Exodus 12:25.

to your fathers

Here, **fathers** means “ancestors.” Alternate translation: [to your ancestors] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

a land flowing with milk and honey

The same description occurs in Exodus 3:8. See how you translated it there and in the several notes for it.

Exodus 13:6

Seven

Alternate translation: [7] (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

and on the seventh day

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use cardinal numbers here. Alternate translation: [and on day 7] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1414)**)

Exodus 13:7

Unleavened bread shall be eaten

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [You must eat unleavened bread] (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1280)**)

seven

Alternate translation: [7] (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

and leavened bread may not be seen among you

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [you may not have any bread with yeast among you] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

And yeast may not be seen among you

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [You may not have any yeast] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

within any of your borders

Alternate translation: [inside any of the borders of your land]

Exodus 13:8

on that day, saying, ‘This is because of what Yahweh did for me when I came out from Egypt

The quotation can be stated as an indirect quote. Alternate translation: [on that day that this is because of what Yahweh did for you when you came out of Egypt] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1439)**)

Exodus 13:9

And it shall be a sign for you on your hand and a memorial between your eyes

This phrase compares the Festival of Unleavened bread to two different types of physical reminders that help people not forget something important. (See: **Parallelism (p.1417)**)

a sign for you on your hand

Moses speaks of celebrating the festival as if it were an object one could tie around their hands to remind them of what Yahweh had done. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [like something you tie around your hand as a reminder] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

and a memorial between your eyes

Moses speaks of celebrating the festival as if it were an object one could tie on their foreheads to remind them of what Yahweh had done. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and like something you tie around your head as a reminder] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

so that the law of Yahweh may be in your mouth

Here, **in your mouth** refers to the words that they speak. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [so you may always be speaking of the law of Yahweh] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

with a strong hand

Here, **hand** refers to power. See how you translated “strong hand” in Exodus 6:1. (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 13:10

from days to days

Alternate translation: [for all time] (See: **Merism (p.1397)**)

Exodus 13:11

and to your fathers

Here, **fathers** means “ancestors.” Alternate translation: [to your ancestors] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

and he gives it to you

Alternate translation: [when he gives the land of the Canaanites to you]

Exodus 13:12

then cause to pass over

This is a deliberate word-play with Exodus 12:12 and Exodus 12:23 because these memorial sacrifices are to be reminders of what happened at the first Passover. It would be good to make a similar word-play in your translation, if possible, but following the meaning as in the UST is fine.

Exodus 13:13

with a lamb. & then you shall break his neck

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could make explicit that either the **lamb** or **donkey** must be killed, as in the UST. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

you do not ransom it

Alternate translation: [you do not ransom the donkey]

Exodus 13:14

when your son asks you later, saying, ‘What is this?’ then you shall say to him

The first quotation can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: [when your son asks you later what this means, then you are to tell him] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1439)**)

With a strong hand

Here, **hand** represents God’s actions or works. See how you translated this in Exodus 6:1. Alternate translation: [With his powerful works] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

from the house of slaves

Moses speaks of Egypt as if it were a house where people keep slaves. See how you translated this in Exodus 13:3. Alternate translation: [from the place where you were slaves] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 13:15

that when Pharaoh was hard to let us go

If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. This means he was stubborn. His stubborn attitude is spoken of as if he were **hard.** Alternate translation: [that when Pharaoh resisted letting us go] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

from the firstborn of man and to the firstborn of beast

This is a figure of speech used to emphasize the extent of the plague, nothing was exempt. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [whether he was a person or an animal] (See: **Merism (p.1397)**)

Exodus 13:16

And it shall be a sign on your hand and a headband between your eyes

This expresses two ways to remember the importance of the Passover event. See how you translated a similar phrase in Exodus 13:9. (See: **Parallelism (p.1417)**)

with a strong hand

Here, **hand** represents God's actions or works. See how you translated this in Exodus 6:1. Alternate translation: [with his powerful works] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 13:17

Verses 17–19 provide background information about the Israelites process of leaving Egypt. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.1289)**)

And so it was

This marks the transition from instruction to narrative. You should mark the resumption of the narrative in a natural way in your language. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

that God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although it was nearby

The route on which God took the Israelites was not the expected route. In some languages you may need to put the portion that describes the expectation first. Alternate translation: [although it was nearby, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines.] (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1313)**)

Lest the people repent when they see war and return to Egypt

In some languages you may need to put the reason before the hypothetical result. Alternate translation: [When they see war, they may repent and return to Egypt] (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1375)**)

Exodus 13:18

And & by fives

The meaning of this term (**by fives**) is uncertain. Many English translations opt for something like “prepared for battle,” because this seems to be the meaning in Numbers 32:17 and the related verses in Joshua 1:14 and 4:12. Because of what the previous verse said about war, it may mean that they went out in formation—like an army would march—but perhaps not armed. Alternate translation: [And ... in formation like an army]

Exodus 13:19

And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him

See Joshua 24:32 regarding the burial of Joseph's bones.

God will certainly attend to you, and you shall bring my bones up with you from here

This is an almost exact quote of what Joseph said in Genesis 50:25; reference your translation there when translating this.

Exodus 13:20

from Succoth, and they camped at Etham

Alternate translation: [from a place named Succoth, and they camped at a place named Etham]

at Etham

Etham was possibly located south of the route heading toward the Philistines, at the border of the wilderness.
(See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

Exodus 13:21

And Yahweh went before their faces

Here, **before their faces** means “in front of the people.” Alternate translation: [And Yahweh led them by going in front of them] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

in a pillar of cloud & in a pillar of fire

The possessive here indicates characteristic. The **cloud** and **fire** looked like a **pillar**. Alternate translation: [in a cloud that looked like a pillar ... in a fire that looked like a pillar] or [in a pillar-shaped cloud ... in a pillar-shaped fire]

to be light to them

Alternate translation: [to be light for them]

fire to be light to them, to go by day or by night

They could travel either by day or night because God provided light at night. You could reorder the cause and effect if that is more natural in your language. Alternate translation: [fire. They could go by day or by night because he was light to them.] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1320)**)

Exodus 13:22

the daytime pillar of cloud or the nighttime pillar of fire

See how you translated this in 13:21.

from the face of the people

Here, **from the face of the people** means “from in front of the people” where they could see it. Alternate translation: [from where they could see it] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 14

Exodus 14 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

This whole chapter is the record of an important event in the history of Israel known as the “parting of the Sea of Reeds (Red Sea).” Throughout this chapter and chapter 15, the word “sea” is used. Exodus 13:18 and 15:22 show that this is the Sea of Reeds (Red Sea). Since the text does not explicitly say that though, the ULT will only say “sea.” In your translation, it may help people to be more specific than the text if just using “sea” is confusing.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Pharaoh’s chariots

These chariots were a fighting force. Pharaoh took an army to kill the Hebrew people. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Rhetorical Questions

The Israelites asked a few rhetorical questions of Moses. These questions were not really directed at Moses, but at Yahweh. This showed their lack of faith in Yahweh. (See: [[rc:*///ta/man/translate/figs-rquestion]] and [[rc:*///tw/dict/bible/kt/faith]])

Exodus 14:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 14:2

Say

This verse begins a direct quote which continues into 13:4. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with an opening first-level quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the beginning of a quotation. There may be other quotations in this chapter; they will be marked by the same punctuation, but they will not have their own notes unless there is something unique about them. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1436)**)

Pi Hahiroth, & Migdol & Baal Zephon

These are locations on Egypt's eastern border. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

the sons of Israel that they should turn and camp before the face of Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, before the face of Baal Zephon

The portion after **that** could be translated as a direct quotation. That would make a second-level direct quotation. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this by marking it with second-level quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: [the sons of Israel, 'Turn and camp before the face of Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, before the face of Baal Zephon.'] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1333)**)

You are to camp

Here, **you** is plural and refers to Moses and the Israelites. If your language uses different forms of "you" depending on the number of people addressed, use a plural form here. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

Exodus 14:3

And Pharaoh will say about the sons of Israel, ‘They are confused in the land. The wilderness has closed in on them

If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: [Pharaoh will say that the Israelites are confused in the land, and the wilderness has closed in on them] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1333)**)

The wilderness has closed in on them

Pharaoh speaks of **the wilderness** as a person who has trapped the Israelites. If this might be confusing for your readers, you could express this meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [It is as if the wilderness is closing in on them.] (See: **Personification (p.1420)**)

Exodus 14:4

And I will strengthen the heart of Pharaoh

This means God will make him stubborn. His stubborn attitude is spoken of as if his **heart** were **strong.** If the **heart** is not the body part your culture uses to refer to a person's will, consider using whichever organ your culture would use for this image. See how you translated this in 4:21. Alternate translation: [But I will cause Pharaoh to be stubborn] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

and he will pursue after them

Alternate translation: [and Pharaoh will pursue the Israelites]

And I will be glorified

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [And people will glorify me] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

And I will be glorified because of Pharaoh and because of all his army

Yahweh is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: [And I will be glorified because of what I do to Pharaoh and to all his army] (See: **Ellipsis (p.1340)**)

And they did so

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express what **they did** explicitly. Alternate translation: [So the Israelites turned and camped as Yahweh had instructed them] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 14:5

And the king of Egypt was told

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [Then someone told the king of Egypt] (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1280)**)

fled

Alternate translation: [had run away]

and the heart of Pharaoh and his servants was turned to the people

Here, **heart** refers to their attitudes toward the Israelites. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [and Pharaoh and his servants changed their attitude about the people] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

and the heart of Pharaoh and his servants was turned to the people

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [and Pharaoh and his servants turned their hearts to the people] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

to the people

Alternate translation: [against the Israelites]

What is this we did that we released Israel from our slavery

They asked this question to show they thought they had done a foolish thing. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [We should not have let the Israelites go free from working for us!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1445)**)

Israel

This is a collective singular noun. If your language would not refer to a group of people in this way, you may need to translate it as plural. Alternate translation: [the Israelites] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1304)**)

Exodus 14:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 14:7

600

Alternate translation: [six hundred] (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

and third men

The precise meaning of this term is not known. Alternate translation: [and officers] or [and shield-bearers] or [and three men]

Exodus 14:8

And Yahweh strengthened the heart of Pharaoh

This means God made him stubborn. His stubborn attitude is spoken of as if his **heart** were “strong.” If the **heart** is not the body part your culture uses to refer to a person’s will, consider using whichever organ your culture would use for this image. See how you translated this in 4:21. Alternate translation: [And Yahweh caused Pharaoh to be stubborn] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

with a high hand

Alternate translation: [boldly] or [defiantly]

Exodus 14:9

all of the horses of the chariots of Pharaoh and his horsemen and his army

It is unclear exactly what the groupings are here. **Horses of the chariots** (probably meaning “horse-drawn chariots”) and **horsemen** could be two groups or two references to the same group. **Army** could mean another group, perhaps on foot (See: 15:19), or it could be a summary grouping. Furthermore, most translations render **horses of the chariots** as “horses and chariots,” suggesting four total groups (possibly because of v. 23). Alternate translation: [all the horse-drawn chariots of Pharaoh and his horsemen and his foot soldiers]

them

Here, **them** refers to the Israelites. Alternate translation: [the Israelites] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p. 1431)**)

Pi Hahiroth & Baal Zephon

These are places on Egypt’s eastern border. See how you translated them in Exodus 14:2. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

Exodus 14:10

And Pharaoh approached

Here, **Pharaoh** represents the entire Egyptian army. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Then Pharaoh and his army approached] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1456)**)

and the sons of Israel lifted their eyes

Alternate translation: [and the sons of Israel looked up] or [and the sons of Israel looked back]

and behold

Here, **behold** is used to draw attention to alarming information that follows. Use a word, phrase, or structure in your language that indicates that the next information is very alarming.

Exodus 14:11

Is it because there were not any graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness

The Israelites ask this question to express their frustration and fear of dying. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [There were plenty of graveyards in Egypt for us to be buried in. You did not have to take us into the wilderness to die!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1445)**)

What is this you have done to us, to bring us out from Egypt

The Israelites ask this question to rebuke Moses for bringing them to the desert to die. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [You should not have endangered us like this by bringing us out of Egypt!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1445)**)

Exodus 14:12

Is this not the word that we spoke to you in Egypt

The Israelites ask this question to emphasize that this is what they had told Moses. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [This is exactly what we told you while we were in Egypt] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1445)**)

in Egypt, saying, ‘Cease from us and let us serve the Egyptians

If it would be more natural in your language, you could express the portion following **saying** as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: [in Egypt? We told you to leave us alone so we could serve the Egyptians.] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1333)**)

Exodus 14:13

and see the salvation of Yahweh, that he will do for you today

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **salvation**, you can express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [and see what Yahweh will do for you today, he will save you] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p. 1278)**)

you will not repeat seeing again until eternity

This statement is very extended for emphasis on its certainty. Alternate translation: [you will not see them again forever]

Exodus 14:14

Yahweh himself will fight

The form **Yahweh himself** emphasizes what Yahweh will do in contrast to what the Israelites will do. Use a way that is natural in your language to indicate this emphasis. Alternate translation: [As for Yahweh, he will fight] (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p.1442)**)

you will be silent

Here, **silent** could mean “still.” The Israelites’ lack of action is in contrast to Yahweh’s fighting. It is not a total lack of motion or sound. Alternate translation: [you will not fight]

Exodus 14:15

Why are you crying out to me

Moses apparently had been praying to God for help, so God uses this question to compel Moses to act. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [Do not call out to me any longer, Moses.] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1445)**)

Exodus 14:16

raise your staff and reach out your hand

See note in the Chapter 8 Introduction regarding **hand** and **staff**.

and split it

Alternate translation: [and divide the sea into two parts]

Exodus 14:17

And behold me

Here, **behold me** is an expression meant to focus the attention of the listener on what the speaker is about to say. In this case, Yahweh is drawing attention to his next actions. Alternate translation: [Look at what I will do]

I will strengthen the heart of the Egyptians

This means that God will make them stubborn. Their stubborn attitude is spoken of as if their **hearts** were “strong.” If the **heart** is not the body part your culture uses to refer to a person’s will, consider using whichever organ your culture would use for this image. See how you translated this in 4:21. Alternate translation: [I will cause the Egyptians to be stubborn] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

and they will enter after them

Alternate translation: [so that the Egyptians will go into the sea after the Israelites]

And I will be glorified because of Pharaoh and because of all his army, because of his chariots and because of his horsemen

Yahweh 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 how you translated a similar phrase in 14:4 Alternate translation: [And I will be glorified because of what I do to Pharaoh, all his army, his chariots, and his horsemen] (See: **Ellipsis (p.1340)**)

And I will be glorified

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [And people will glorify me] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 14:18

when I am glorified

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [when I cause people to glorify me] (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1280)**)

when I am glorified because of Pharaoh, because of his chariots and because of his horsemen

Yahweh 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 how you translated a similar phrase in 14:4 Alternate translation: [when I get glory because of what I do to Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen] or [when I show my glory by what I do to Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen] (See: **Ellipsis (p. 1340)**)

Exodus 14:19

before the face of the camp of & from before their face

Here, **face** means “front.” Alternate translation: [in front of the camp of ... from in front of them] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

the pillar of cloud

See how you translated this in 13:21.

Israel

This is a collective singular noun. If your language would not refer to a group of people in this way, you may need to translate it as plural. Alternate translation: [the Israelites] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1304)**)

Exodus 14:20

Israel

This is a collective singular noun. If your language would not refer to a group of people in this way, you may need to translate it as plural. Alternate translation: [the Israelites] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1304)**)

And it became a cloud, and darkness, and it lit up the night

Alternate translation: [And the cloud became dark on one side and light on the other side all night]

Exodus 14:21

And Moses reached out his hand over the sea

See note in the Chapter 8 Introduction regarding the **hand** and staff.

by a & east wind

An **east wind** originates in the east and blows towards the west.

And the waters were divided

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [And Yahweh divided the waters] (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1280)**)

Exodus 14:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 14:23

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 14:24

in the watch of the morning

This is the last third of the night. It is approximately the three hours before sunrise. Alternate translation: [very early in the morning] or [in the time before the sun rises] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

through the pillar of fire and cloud

See how you translated this in 13:21.

the camp of the Egyptians & the camp of the Egyptians

Alternate translation: [the army of the Egyptians ... the army of the Egyptians]

Exodus 14:25

from the face of Israel

Here, **the face of Israel** means the presence of Israel. See the UST. (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 14:26

And Yahweh said to Moses, “Reach out your hand over the sea, and the waters will return on the Egyptians, on his chariots, and on his horsemen

If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: [Yahweh told Moses to reach out with his hand over the sea so that the waters would come back onto the Egyptians, their chariots, and their horsemen.] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1333)**)

Reach out your hand over the sea

See note in the Chapter 8 Introduction regarding the **hand** and staff.

on his chariots, and on his horsemen

Here, **his** refers to Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Alternate translation: [on Pharaoh’s chariots and on Pharaoh’s horsemen] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

Exodus 14:27

And Moses reached out his hand over the sea

See note in the Chapter 8 Introduction regarding the **hand** and staff.

before the face of the morning

Here, **before the face of** means “before the occurrence of.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [before it was morning] (See: **Metonymy (p. 1405)**)

And Yahweh shook off the Egyptians in the middle of the sea

Here, Yahweh is pictured as acting toward the Egyptians as if they were dirt or dust on his clothing that he shakes to be rid of them. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and Yahweh threw the Egyptians back into the middle of the sea] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 14:28

Not even one of them remained

This negative statement is meant to strongly convey the idea that all the Egyptians were gone. If this is confusing in your language, you can express the meaning positively. Alternate translation: [Every one of them was gone] (See: **Litotes (p.1395)**)

Exodus 14:29

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 14:30

Israel

This is a collective singular noun. If your language would not refer to a group of people in this way, you may need to translate it as plural. Alternate translation: [the Israelites] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1304)**)

from the hand of Egypt

Here, **hand** refers to power. Alternate translation: [from the Egyptians' power] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

on the shore of the sea

Alternate translation: [on the land along the edge of the sea]

Exodus 14:31

Israel

This is a collective singular noun. If your language would not refer to a group of people in this way, you may need to translate it as plural. Alternate translation: [the Israelites] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1304)**)

the great hand

Here, **hand** refers to power. Alternate translation: [the great power] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 15

Exodus 15 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

Verses 1b-18 and 21b of chapter 15 are poetry. They are a song of praise to Yahweh because he defeated and destroyed the Egyptian army (Exodus 14:26–28). Translating poetry should be done by someone who is a skilled poet in the target language. Because the forms of poetry are so different in different languages, a translation that is good poetry in the target language may seem very different from the original poem. The structure may look quite different. The poet will be well served by looking at the entire poem from multiple perspectives. He will need to know the meaning of the poem, the themes and discourse structure of the poem, and the feelings that the poem is supposed to create in the reader at each point (UST, tNotes). He will need to understand how that was accomplished by the original form and structure (ULT). Then he will need to compose the translated poem using forms and structures that have the same or similar meaning, themes, discourse elements, and feelings in his own language. Unlike in many other places, most notes in this chapter will not advise towards expressing meaning in plain ways or combining parallel phrases as that advice would be too simplistic for handling poetry.

Structure

This song follows a basic AB structure which is given to us in verse 1b-c and 21b-c:

- A - praise to Yahweh - he is magnificent (expressed in various words)
- B - because he defeats our enemies

The song can be divided into three major sections, each of which is patterned as: AB(a)b. Each section starts with an AB portion which is characterized by fewer verbal forms (especially the A portion). The section then elaborates on each. Note that there are other possible analyses of the structure of the poem.

Here is an outline of the structure according to this model:

- Section 1 (See: alternate breakdown below):
- 1b: A “Let me sing to Yahweh, for he has triumphantly triumphed;”
- 1c: B “the horse and the one riding it he threw into the sea.”
- 2–3: a
- 4–5: b
- Section 2:
- 6a: A
- 6b: B
- 7a: a “And in the abundance of your majesty”
- 7a-10: b “you overthrow those who rise up against you ... ”
- Section 3:
- 11: A
- 12: B
- 13a: a (possibly) “In your covenant loyalty”
- 13a-17: b
- 18: finale

Alternate breakdown of section 1: it is possible to view 1b-c as the introduction and divide verse 2 such that:

- 2a: A “Yah is my strength and my song”
- 2b: B “and he has become my salvation”
- 2c-3: a

- 4–5: b

Themes:

There are several images and themes that are throughout the song as well as some that are throughout an individual section.

- "High" versus "low": Yahweh is high, while his enemies are low.
- The following words are all related to the idea of being high or rising up: **triumph** (v1), **exalt** (v2), **majestic** (v6, v11), **majesty** (v7), and **the mountain of** [Yahweh's] **possession** (v17). In the last case, Yahweh's people are brought to a high place with him.
- In contrast, his enemies are low. Note in 15:7, Yahweh overthrows those who **rise up against** [him]. Ideas of being low are as follows: **sank** (v4, v10), **deeps** (v5), **descended into the depths** (v5), **melted away** (v15), and **fall on them** (v16).
- The strength of Yahweh in 15:2, 15:6, and 15:13.
- The effectiveness of Yahweh's hand versus the enemy's hand. Yahweh's hand (and arm) is effective in 15:6, 15:12, 15:16, and 15:17 but the enemy's hand is ineffective despite his boasting in 15:9.
- There is parallel imagery near the end of each section. The enemy is compared three times by simile to a heavy, inert object. In 15:5 and 15:16 that is a **stone**, in 15:10 that is **lead**.
- More parallel imagery occurs at the end of sections one (v5) and two (v10): that of the enemy sinking in the water and being covered by it.
- In sections two and three the water (v8) and the other peoples (v16) are made still by Yahweh.
- Section two begins and ends with **majestic** (v6, v10) and that word is picked up in the beginning of section three (v11).
- In section two (v9), the enemies seek to **dispossess** (or disinherit) the Israelites; in section three (v16), the Israelites come to live in the land of Yahweh's **possession** (or inheritance).
- In 15:11, three themes for the third section are introduced. These are each expanded on in that section.
- **Holiness** occurs again in 15:13 and 15:16
- **Fear** is vividly described in 15:14–16 (shake, terror, panic, trembling, melted away, dread)
- Yahweh **does miracles** to protect and build a home for his people
- 15:14–16a are a chiasm, a complex parallel structure where concepts are repeated in reverse order:
- A: 14a: peoples (nations) *become* afraid
- B: 14b: *inhabitants* of Philistia are afraid
- C: 15a: *rulers* of Edom are afraid
- C': 15b: *rulers* of Moab are afraid
- B': 15c: *inhabitants* of Canaan are afraid
- A': 16a: people *become* afraid
- In section three, there is another parallel structure:
- v13: you led this people => v16: your people pass by
- v13: this people you redeemed => v16: this people you acquired (or purchased or ransomed)
- v13: you led them to the home => v17: you will bring them ... [to] the place ... you made
- v13: of your holiness => v17: the Holy Place

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

The Israelite's discontent

In 15:24 the word **murmur** is introduced for the first time. This is a very strong term for "grumble" or "complain" that is used to describe the Israelites' attitude throughout their time in the wilderness. It occurs several times in Exodus and Numbers.

Yahweh's laws

In verses 24–26, there is an introductory revelation of the requirement that Israel keep the covenant by obeying the law of Moses. (See: **law, law of Moses, law of Yahweh, law of God (p.1480)**)

Exodus 15:1

he has triumphantly triumphed

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state explicitly over whom Yahweh triumphed. Alternate translation: [he has achieved a glorious victory over the army of Egypt] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

he has triumphantly triumphed

Alternate translation: [he is highly exalted] or [he is extremely high] or [he is exaltedly exalted]

the horse and the one riding it he threw into the sea

Moses sang about God causing the sea to cover and drown the horse and rider as if God had thrown them **into the sea**. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [he has made the horse and rider drown in the sea] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

the horse and the one riding it

This refers to many or all of the Egyptian horses and riders that were chasing the Israelites. Alternate translation: [the horses and their riders] (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1360)**)

and the one riding it

Here, **rider** could either refer to a person who sits on a horse or who travels in a chariot that a horse is pulling.

Exodus 15:2

Yah is my strength

Moses is expressing the help that he gets from Yahweh by equating Yahweh with **strength**. Use a form or metaphor from your language that would express Yahweh's strengthening help. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Yah is the one who gives me strength] or [Yah is the strong one who protects me] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Yah is & and my song

Moses calls Yahweh his **song** because Yahweh is the one he sings about or because Yahweh causes him to sing. Use a form or metaphor from your language that would express Yahweh being a song of joy. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Yah is ... the one I sing about] or [Yah ... makes me sing joyfully] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

and he has become my salvation

Moses calls Yahweh his salvation because Yahweh saved him. Use a form or metaphor from your language that would express Yahweh's saving power. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and he has saved me] or [and he is the one who saves me] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

This is my God, and I will glorify him, the God of my father, and I will exalt him

These lines are expressing very similar ideas for emphasis. If that is a normal way to make an emphatic (poetic) statement or if it would be understood in your language, you could translate in a similar way. If, however, repetition like this would create a different meaning, find a structure in your language that would fit. (See: **Parallelism (p. 1417)**)

Exodus 15:3

Yahweh is a man of war

Moses calls Yahweh a **man of war** because he powerfully fought against the Egyptians and won. Alternate translation: [Yahweh is like a warrior] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 15:4

He threw the chariots of Pharaoh and his army into the sea. And his chosen officers sank in the Sea of Reeds

These lines are synonymous parallels where the second strengthens what is said in the first. Alternate translation: [He threw all of Pharaoh's army into the sea, including the chariots; even his chosen officers sank in the Sea of Reeds] (See: **Parallelism (p.1417)**)

He threw the chariots of Pharaoh and his army into the sea

Moses sings about Yahweh causing the sea to cover Pharaoh's chariots and army as if Yahweh had thrown them **into the sea.** If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [He has made Pharaoh's chariot riders and army drown in the sea] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 15:5

The deeps cover them; they descended into the depths like a stone

These lines are synonymous parallels where the second clarifies what is said in the first. Alternate translation: [The deeps covered them because they had descended into the depths like a stone] (See: **Parallelism (p.1417)**)

they descended into the depths like a stone

This comparison is that just **like a stone** does not float but sinks to the bottom of the sea, the enemy soldiers sank to the bottom of the sea. Alternate translation: [they went down into the deep water like a stone sinking to the bottom of the sea] (See: **Simile (p.1449)**)

Exodus 15:6

Your right hand, Yahweh, is majestic in power; your right hand, Yahweh, shatters the enemy

These lines are synonymous parallels where the second takes the abstract idea in the first and makes it concrete (though still with poetic imagery). Alternate translation: [Yahweh, you show how majestic in power your right hand is by shattering the enemy] (See: **Parallelism (p.1417)**)

Your right hand, Yahweh, is majestic in power; your right hand, Yahweh, shatters the enemy

Moses speaks of Yahweh as if Yahweh had hands. The **right hand** refers to Yahweh's power or the things Yahweh does powerfully. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [Yahweh, your power is glorious; Yahweh, your power has shattered the enemy] or [Yahweh, what you do is gloriously powerful; Yahweh, by your power you have shattered the enemy] (See: **Metonymy (p. 1405)**)

shatters the enemy

Moses speaks of the enemy as if it were fragile and could be **shattered** like glass or pottery. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [completely destroys the enemy] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 15:7

you overthrow those who rise up against you. You send out your heat; it devours them like stubble

These lines are synonymous parallels where the second takes the abstract idea in the first portion (**you overthrow those who rise up against you**) and makes it concrete (though still with poetic imagery). Alternate translation: [you overthrow those who rise up against you by sending out your heat to devour them like stubble] (See: **Parallelism (p.1417)**)

And in the abundance of your majesty

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **abundance** and **majesty**, you can express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [You are abundantly majestic and] or [Because you are abundantly majestic,] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

those who rise up against you

Rebelling against Yahweh is spoken of as **rising up against** him. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [those who rebel against you] or [your enemies] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

your heat

Alternate translation: [your wrath] or [your fury]

You send out your heat

Moses speaks of Yahweh's wrath (literally **heat**) as if it were a servant that Yahweh sent out to do something. Alternate translation: [You show your wrath] or [You act according to your wrath] (See: **Personification (p.1420)**)

it devours them like stubble

Moses speaks of God's wrath as if it were fire that could completely burn up things. His enemies were completely destroyed like **stubble** in a fire. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [it completely destroys your enemies like a fire that burns up straw] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

it devours them like stubble

Here the enemies (or **those who rise up against** Yahweh) are pictured as if they were a highly flammable piece of dried grass. Alternate translation: [it devours the enemy as if they were stubble] (See: **Simile (p.1449)**)

Exodus 15:8

And by the breath of your nostrils

Moses speaks of God as if God had a nose, and he speaks of the wind as if God blew the wind from his nose. Alternate translation: [You blew on the sea and] (See: **Personification (p.1420)**)

And by the breath of your nostrils the waters were piled up; the flowing waters were stood upright like a heap

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [The blast from your nostrils piled the waters up and made the flowing waters stand upright in a heap] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

the waters were piled up; the flowing waters were stood upright like a heap; the deeps thickened in the heart of the sea

These lines are synonymous parallels where each line means basically the same thing, but each gives the reader a different poetic image. (See: **Parallelism (p.1417)**)

in the heart of the sea

The center or deepest part of the sea is spoken of as if the sea had a **heart**. Alternate translation: [in the center of the sea] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 15:9

my soul will be satisfied in them

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [I will satisfy my desire on them] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

my hand will dispossess them

The meaning of this phrase is unclear. The word translated **dispossess** could also mean “possess” or “inherit.” What seems clear is that the Egyptians plan to use their power to prevent the Israelites from possessing good things. Whether this is a reference back to **plunder** earlier in the verse or to recapturing them as slaves or to taking over the Israelites’ place in the land of Goshen or to keeping them from reaching the promised land (of Yahweh’s possession, see 15:17 regarding where Yahweh will bring his people) or something else is not so clear. It could also refer to taking away their life and breath. **Dispossess** was chosen rather than another term because the verb is in a causative form here. Alternate translation: [my hand will possess them] or [my hand will inherit them] or [my hand will kill them]

my hand will dispossess them

Here **hand** is used of the Egyptians’ power (that is, their military strength). If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [I will dispossess them] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 15:10

You blew with your wind

Moses spoke about God making the **wind** blow as if God **blew** the wind through his nose or mouth. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [But you made the wind blow] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

they sank like lead in the majestic waters

Lead is a heavy metal that is commonly used to make things sink in water. It is used here to show how quickly God's enemies were destroyed. Alternate translation: [sank as fast as a heavy piece of metal in the deep turbulent waters] (See: **Simile (p.1449)**)

Exodus 15:11

Who is like you among the gods Yahweh

Moses uses this question to show how great God is. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [O Yahweh, no one is like you among the gods!] or [Yahweh, none of the gods is like you!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1445)**)

Who is like you, majestic in holiness, feared in praises, doing miracles

Moses uses this question to show how great God is. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [No one is like you. No one is majestic in holiness as you are, no one is honored in praises as you are, and no one does miracles as you do!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1445)**)

majestic in holiness

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **holiness**, you can express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [majestic and holy] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

Exodus 15:12

your right hand

The phrase **right hand** represents the strong power of God. Alternate translation: [with your strong power] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

You reached out your right hand

Moses speaks about God causing something to happen as if God **reached out** with his **hand**. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [With your strong power you made it happen] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

and the earth swallows them

Moses personifies the earth as if it could swallow or devour with its mouth. Alternate translation: [the earth devours them] (See: **Personification (p.1420)**)

Exodus 15:13

In your covenant faithfulness, you led this people you redeemed. In your strength, you guided them

These lines are structural parallels where the lines are saying similar things, but the parallelism is more in the construction of the lines. **In your** is repeated and the concepts of **led** and **guided** are very similar to one another. (See: **Parallelism (p.1417)**)

your holiness

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **holiness**, you can express the same idea in another way. See the UST. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

Exodus 15:14

Verses 14–16a form a complex parallel structure where things are repeated in reverse. (See the Chapter 15 Introduction) (See: **Parallelism (p.1417)**)

they shake

This means to shake with fear. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

anguish seized the inhabitants of Philistia

Moses speaks of **anguish** as if it were a person that could forcefully grab hold of someone and make them extremely afraid. Alternate translation: [the inhabitants of Philistia will be afraid] (See: **Personification (p.1420)**)

Exodus 15:15

trembling seizes the leaders of Moab

Moses speaks of **trembling** as if it were a person that could forcefully grab hold of someone and make them extremely afraid. Alternate translation: [the leaders of Moab will be afraid] (See: **Personification (p.1420)**)

melted away

Moses uses the phrase, **melted away,** to speak of people becoming weak because of their fear. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [became weak from fear] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 15:16

Terror and dread fall on them

Terror and dread form a doublet meaning “extremely fearful.” If your language does not use repetition in this way, you can combine these phrases. Alternate translation: [They will become extremely fearful] (See: **Doublet (p.1338)**)

Terror and dread fall on them

Terror and dread are pictured as physical objects that could **fall on** people. The image might be of them crushing people or being a heavy weight that people struggle under (however, the image is not specified). It means that the people will feel the emotions of terror and dread very strongly. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [They will be overwhelmed with feelings of terror and dread] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

By the greatness of your arm

Yahweh’s **arm** represents his great strength. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [Because of your great strength] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

they are still as a stone

This could mean: (1) “they will be silent like stone” or (2) “they will be motionless as stone” (See: **Simile (p.1449)**)

Exodus 15:17

You will bring them, and you will plant them

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express where God would bring them explicitly. Alternate translation: [You will take your people to Canaan and plant them there] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

You will bring them

Since Moses was not already in Canaan, some languages would use “take” rather than **bring.** Alternate translation: [You will take them] (See: **Go and Come (p.1362)**)

and you will plant them on the mountain of

Moses speaks about God giving his people the land to live in as if they were a plant that God was planting. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and you will settle them on the mountain of] or [and you will let them live on the mountain of] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

on the mountain of your possession

This refers to Mount Zion in the land of Canaan.

on the mountain of your possession

Moses speaks about God promising to give his people **the mountain** forever as if he were giving it to them as an inheritance. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [on the mountain that you have given them as an inheritance] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

that your hands built

The phrase **your hands** refers to God’s power. Alternate translation: [that you have built by your power] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 15:18

Yahweh will reign forever and ever

Alternate translation: [Yahweh reigns forever and ever]

Exodus 15:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 15:20

a tambourine & with tambourines

A **tambourine** is a hand-held musical instrument like a small drum that also has pieces of metal around the side that make a metallic rattling sound when shaken. Alternate translation: [timbrel] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p. 1460)**)

and all the women went out after her with tambourines and with dancing

Here, **all** may be a generalization; it may not have been every woman. It could be better to translate as a restrictive clause as in the UST. Alternate translation: [and every woman who went out after her had a tambourine and danced] (See: **Hyperbole (p.1371)**)

Exodus 15:21

he has triumphed triumphantly

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state explicitly over whom Yahweh triumphed. See how you translated this in Exodus 15:1. Alternate translation: [he has achieved a glorious victory over the army of Egypt] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

the horse and the one riding it he threw into the sea

Miriam sang about God causing the **sea** to cover and drown the **horse and the one riding it** as if God had thrown them **into the sea**. See how you translated this in Exodus 15:1. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [he has made the horse and rider drown in the sea] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 15:22

Israel

The word **Israel** represents the people of Israel. If your language does not use singular nouns in that way, you can use a different expression. Alternate translation: [Moses led the Israelite people] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1304)**)

the Wilderness of Shur

We do not know the exact location of this place. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

Exodus 15:23

to Marah

We do not know the exact location of **Marah**. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

Exodus 15:24

And the people murmured against Moses

Murmur is a very strong term for “grumble” or “complain” that is used to describe the Israelites’ attitude throughout their time in the wilderness. It occurs several times in Exodus and Numbers. Alternate translation: [And the people complained against Moses] or [And the people grumbled at Moses]

Exodus 15:25

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 15:26

to the voice of Yahweh your God

Yahweh is speaking about his own voice. Alternate translation: [to my voice] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p. 1351)**)

to the voice of Yahweh your God

Yahweh's voice represents what he says. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [to what I say] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

and you do what is right in his eyes

The **eyes** represent seeing, and seeing represents thoughts or judgment. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent idiom from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and do what Yahweh considers to be right] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

and you give ear to his commands

The **ear** represents listening, and listening represents obeying. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent idiom from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and you carefully obey his commands] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

all of the diseases that I put on the Egyptians I shall not put on you

God speaks of causing people to have diseases as putting diseases on them. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent idiom from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [I will not cause any of you to have the diseases that I cause the Egyptians to have] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Exodus 15:27

to Elim

Elim is an oasis in the desert, a place with water and shade trees. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

and 70

Alternate translation: [and seventy] (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

Exodus 16

Exodus 16 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

This entire chapter is the story of the Israelites complaining about food and Yahweh providing food. Verses 22–30 introduce the Sabbath.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Complaints

After complaining about the water, the Israelites complained that they had less food than in Egypt. This is intended to show their ungratefulness and their sinful view of Yahweh. (See: **sin, sinful, sinner, sinning (p.1486)**)

Prohibition against storing food

The people were not allowed to store the food, called manna, that Yahweh provided to them. This is because they were to trust in Yahweh to provide for their needs every day. (See: **trust, trusted, trustworthy, trustworthiness (p.1488)**)

Sabbath

This is the first recorded celebration of the Sabbath rest. (See: **Sabbath (p.1484)**)

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Bread as food

Yahweh speaks of the food that he will send as if it were bread. The manna he gave them was perhaps not literally bread. The Israelites would eat this food every day, just as they had eaten bread every day before this. Alternate translation: [food] or [food like bread] (See: [[rc:///*tw/dict/bible/other/bread]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor]])

Chronology

16:34–36 are written from a much later perspective. Translators will need to find a way to show that this portion gives background information from a much later point (at least 40 years).

Box of the Covenant

Related to the chronology issue, although the covenant has not yet been made, it is referenced in Exodus 16:34. This is probably an editorial comment made after these events. (See: **covenant (p.1473)**)

Wilderness of Sin

Sin is the name of a part of the Sinai Wilderness. It is the description of a place, and it has nothing to do with sinning. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

Exodus 16:1

Sin

The word **Sin** here is the Hebrew name of the wilderness. It is not the English word “sin.” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

on the fifteenth day of the second month

This time coincides with the end of April and the beginning of May on Western calendars. You could convert the Hebrew day and month into an approximate date on the calendar that your culture uses. However, the Jews used a lunar calendar, so if you use a solar calendar, the date will be different every year and the translation will not be entirely accurate. So you may just want to give the number of the day and the name of the month on the Hebrew calendar, and say approximately what time of year that is on your calendar in a footnote. (See: **Hebrew Months (p. 1364)**)

on the fifteenth day of the second month

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use cardinal numbers here. Alternate translation: [on day 15 of month 2] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1414)**)

Exodus 16:2

And all the congregation of the sons of Israel murmured

Here, **all** is a generalization. Alternate translation: [And many of the community of the sons of Israel murmured] (See: **Hyperbole (p.1371)**)

And & murmured

Alternate translation: [And ... spoke angrily]

Exodus 16:3

If only we had died

This is a way of saying that they wished that they had died. It is a hypothetical past statement. Translate it in a way that makes it clear that this did not actually happen. Alternate translation: [We wish that we had died] (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1375)**)

by the hand of Yahweh

The phrase **the hand of Yahweh** represents Yahweh's action. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [by Yahweh's action] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 16:4

make bread rain down from heaven for you

God speaks of food coming **down from heaven** as if it were rain. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [make bread come down from heaven like rain] or [make bread fall to you from the sky] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

in my law

Alternate translation: [in my instruction]

Exodus 16:5

And so it will be, on the sixth day, that they shall prepare

Alternate translation: [It will happen on the sixth day that they will prepare] or [On the sixth day they will prepare]

on the sixth day

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use cardinal numbers here. Alternate translation: [on day 6] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1414)**)

twice

two times

Exodus 16:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 16:7

And who are we that you murmur against us

Moses and Aaron used this question to show the people that it was foolish to complain against them. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [We are not powerful enough for you to complain against us.] or [It is foolish to complain against us, because we cannot do what you want.] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1445)**)

Exodus 16:8

And what are we

Moses used this question to show the people that he and Aaron did not have the power to give them what they wanted. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [Aaron and I cannot give you what you want.] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1445)**)

And what are we? Not against us is your murmuring, but against Yahweh

The people were complaining against Moses and Aaron, who were Yahweh's servants. So by complaining against them, the people were really complaining against Yahweh. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [Your complaints are not really against us; they are against Yahweh, because we are his servants] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 16:9

And Moses said to Aaron, “Say to all of the congregation of the sons of Israel, ‘Approach

There are two layers of quotations here. You may want to translate one or the other as an indirect quotation in order to reduce the layers of quotations in this passage. Alternate translation: [And Moses told Aaron to tell all of the congregation of the sons of Israel, “Approach] or [And Moses told Aaron, “Tell all of the congregation of the sons of Israel to approach] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1439)**)

Exodus 16:10

And so it was

This phrase is used here to mark an important event in the story. The important event here is the people seeing Yahweh's glory. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

and behold

The word **behold** here shows that the people saw something extraordinary.

Exodus 16:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 16:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 16:13

And so it was

This phrase is used here to mark an important part of the events. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

quail

The word **quail** means a type of small, plump game bird. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 16:14

like frost

Frost is frozen dew that forms on the ground. It is very fine. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

like frost

The original readers knew what frost is like, so this phrase would help them understand what the flakes were like. Alternate translation: [flakes that looked like frost] or [flakes that were fine like frost] (See: **Simile (p.1449)**)

Exodus 16:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 16:16

each according to the mouths of his eating

Alternate translation: [according to how much each will eat]

an omer

2 liters (See: **Biblical Volume (p.1297)**)

an omer for each person up to the number of your people, each shall take for those in his tent

Alternate translation: [take an omer per person according to how many people are in the gatherer's tent]

Exodus 16:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 16:18

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 16:19

A man & not

A man refers to people in general, not to one particular man. If this would be misunderstood in your language, use a more natural phrase. Alternate translation: [No one] (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1360)**)

Exodus 16:20

and it bred worms

Alternate translation: [and it decayed with worms]

Exodus 16:21

each man according to the mouths of his eating

Alternate translation: [everyone according to how much they would eat] or [everyone according to how many people they had to feed]

Exodus 16:22

And so it was

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story. Verses 16:22–30 tell about what the people did concerning the manna on the sixth and seventh days of the week. If your language has a way for marking this as a new part of the story, you could consider using it here. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p. 1382)**)

on the sixth day

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use cardinal numbers here. Alternate translation: [on day 6] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1414)**)

twice as much

Alternate translation: [two times as much]

bread

This refers to the **bread** that appeared as thin flakes on the ground each morning.

Exodus 16:23

is a rest, a Sabbath of holiness to Yahweh

Alternate translation: [is a day to stop working completely and dedicate to Yahweh]

a Sabbath of holiness

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **holiness**, you can express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [a holy Sabbath] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

Exodus 16:24

And it did not become foul

Alternate translation: [And it did not smell rotten]

Exodus 16:25

for it is Sabbath, a day for Yahweh

Alternate translation: [today is a Sabbath, a day to honor Yahweh by not working]

Exodus 16:26

and on the seventh day

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use cardinal numbers here. Alternate translation: [but on day seven] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1414)**)

Exodus 16:27

but they found none

Alternate translation: [but they did not find any manna]

Exodus 16:28

Until what time will you refuse to keep my commandments and my laws

God used this question to scold the people because they did not obey his laws. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [You people still do not keep my commandments and laws!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1445)**)

will you refuse

Yahweh speaks to Moses, but the word **you** refers to the people of Israel in general. If the singular form would not be natural in your language for someone who was speaking to a group of people, you could use the plural forms of "you" in your translation. (See: **Singular Pronouns that refer to Groups (p.1452)**)

to keep my commandments and my laws

Alternate translation: [to obey my commandments and my laws]

Exodus 16:29

For Yahweh has given you the Sabbath

Yahweh speaks about teaching people to rest on the Sabbath as if the **Sabbath** were a gift. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [I, Yahweh, have taught you to rest on the Sabbath] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

on the sixth day & on the seventh day

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use cardinal numbers here. Alternate translation: [on day 6 ... on day 7] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1414)**)

bread

This refers to the bread that appeared as thin flakes on the ground each morning.

for two days

Alternate translation: [for 2 days]

Exodus 16:30

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 16:31

like coriander seed, white

Coriander is an herb also known as cilantro. People eat both the leaves and seeds. People dry the seeds, grind them into a powder, and put it in food to add flavor. Alternate translation: [like a small white seed] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

was like wafers

Wafers are very thin biscuits or crackers.

Exodus 16:32

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 16:33

before the face of Yahweh

Here, **face** represents the presence of Yahweh. Alternate translation: [in the presence of Yahweh] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 16:34

Verses 34–36 provide a later commentary on the chapter. If your language has a way of marking background information you may want to use it starting from verse 34 or verse 35. You may want to leave verse 34 more connected to verse 33 even though it references the **Covenant**, which has not been given yet. (See: **Background Information (p.1289)**)

before the face of the Covenant

Here, **face** represents being near the **Covenant.** Alternate translation: [near the Covenant] (See: **Metonymy (p. 1405)**)

Exodus 16:35

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 16:36

And an omer, it is a tenth of an ephah

An **omer** and an **ephah** are both units of dry measurement. An ephah is approximately equal to a bushel, and an omer is one-tenth of an ephah. The original readers would have known how much an ephah was. This sentence would help them know how much an omer was. (See: **Biblical Volume (p.1297)**)

And an omer, it is a tenth of an ephah

For languages that do not use fractions, this can be reworded. Alternate translation: [Now ten omers equal one ephah] (See: **Fractions (p.1358)**)

Exodus 17

Exodus 17 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

- v. 1–7: the Israelites complain and Yahweh gives them water
- v. 8–16: Israel defeats Amalek in battle

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Rhetorical questions

Moses uses several rhetorical questions in this chapter. The purpose of these questions is to convince people of their sin. Likewise, the people's rhetorical question shows their ignorance. (See: [[rc:*///ta/man/translate/figs-rquestion]] and [[rc:*///tw/dict/bible/kt/sin]])

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Wilderness of Sin

Sin is the name of a part of the Sinai Wilderness. It is not the description of a place, and it has nothing to do with the act of sinning. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

Naming

As in the last couple of chapters, places and things are named for what happens in that location. In this chapter is Massah (which means "test"), Meribah ("arguing"), and an altar named "Yahweh is my Banner," because Yahweh will be at war with the Amalekites forever.

Exodus 17:1

And all the community of the sons of Israel journeyed

A new scene begins here, which may need to be marked in a certain way in your language. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

Sin

The word **Sin** here is the Hebrew name of the wilderness. It is not the English word “sin.” See how you translated this in Exodus 16:1. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

at the mouth of Yahweh

Here, **mouth** refers to Yahweh’s commands (that is, what he says to do). If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [at the command of Yahweh] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

at Rephidim

Rephidim means “the resting place,” a place to rest on long journeys through the wilderness. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

Exodus 17:2

Why are you quarreling with me? Why do you test Yahweh

Moses uses these questions to scold the people. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [Why are you speaking against me? And why are you trying to test whether Yahweh is able to give you what you need?] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1445)**)

Exodus 17:3

Is this why you brought us up from Egypt? To kill me and my sons and my cattle, with thirst

The people use this question to accuse Moses of wanting to kill them. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [Why did you bring us up out of Egypt? Did you bring us here to cause us and our children and animals to die because we have no water to drink?] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p. 1445)**)

Exodus 17:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 17:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 17:6

before your face

Here, **before your face** means “in front of you.” (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 17:7

Massah

Massah is a place in the desert whose name means “testing” in Hebrew. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

and Meribah

Meribah is a place in the desert whose name means “complaining” in Hebrew. (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 1367)**)

or not

In some languages it may be unnatural to explicitly have the negative option included in this question or to have it at the end. It may be omitted or relocated in the question if that is the case.

Exodus 17:8

And Amalek came

A new scene begins here which may need to be marked in a certain way in your language. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

Amalek & Israel

Amalek and **Israel** both refer to the nations (people groups) descended from that individual by simply using the name of the ancestor. If your readers would not understand this, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [the Amalekites ... the Israelites] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Amalek & Israel

Amalek and **Israel** are both collective nouns that refer to the nations (people groups) descended from that individual. If your language does not use singular nouns in that way, you can use a different expression. Alternate translation: [the Amalekites ... the Israelites] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1304)**)

Amalek

Amalek or the Amalekites are a completely new participant in the story. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new character. (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1385)**)

at Rephidim

Rephidim was the name of a place in the desert. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

Exodus 17:9

Joshua

Joshua is a completely new participant in the story. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new character. Later he becomes a major character, but not really in the book of Exodus. (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1385)**)

Exodus 17:10

And Joshua did as Moses said to him, to fight Amalek

Joshua represents himself and the Israelites that he led into battle. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And, as Moses instructed, Joshua and the men he chose fought against the Amalekites] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1456)**)

and Hur

Hur was the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

and Hur

Hur is a new participant in the story, which you may need to point out in your translation. However, he is a very minor character. He only appears in this passage and once much later in the book, so you may not need to highlight him at all. (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1385)**)

Exodus 17:11

then Israel would be winning, & then Amalek would be winning

The words **Israel** and **Amalek** represent the fighters from those groups. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the Israelite fighters were winning ... the Amalekite fighters would begin to win] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1456)**)

Exodus 17:12

And the hands of Moses became heavy

The author writes of Moses' arms becoming tired as if his **hands became heavy**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [And Moses' arms became tired] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

one from this, and one from that

Alternate translation: [one on one side, and one on the other]

Exodus 17:13

with the edge of the sword

The **sword** represents battle. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [in combat] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 17:14

I will certainly blot out the memory of Amalek

God speaks of destroying Amalek as if he were removing people's memory of Amalek. When a group of people is completely destroyed, there is nothing to remind people about them. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [I will completely destroy Amalek] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Amalek

The Amalekites are referred to by naming their ancestor. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [Amalekites] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

from under the skies

This phrase makes an intentionally broad image and represents all people everywhere. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [from all people everywhere] (See: **Hyperbole (p.1371)**)

Exodus 17:15

is my banner

A **banner** is something lifted up high, perhaps like a flag, that people can see from a distance and follow. Alternate translation: [is my military standard] or [is my guidon]

Exodus 17:16

Because a hand was against the throne of Yah

The Hebrew here is very difficult, and there are a variety of opinions regarding the meaning. Questions include: (1) Whose hand is referred to? Amalek's, Yahweh's, or Moses'? (2) What is the hand on (or against)? Yahweh's throne or banner? (3) What is the meaning of the Hebrew preposition meaning on, against, or above? What does that signify? Rebellion, or taking an oath, or holding onto a symbol of power? If there is another translation in your region, it may be best to simply follow the interpretation it gives. Alternate translation: [Because a hand was on the throne of Yah] or [Because a hand was on the banner of Yah]

war is to Yahweh against Amalek

This phrase has no verbs in Hebrew. You may need to translate the noun **war** as a verb. Alternate translation: [Yahweh will make war with Amalek] or [Yahweh will war against Amalek]

Exodus 18

Exodus 18 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

- v. 1–12: Jethro visits Moses and hears all that Yahweh has done
- v. 13–27: Jethro observes Moses and advises him to set up a subsidiarity leadership structure; Moses does so

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Leadership lessons

Jethro taught Moses an important leadership lesson in this chapter. Many scholars look at this chapter for important leadership lessons. Moses delegated some of his responsibilities to other godly men so that he would not become worn out by all the demands made of him. (See: **godly, godliness, ungodly, godless, ungodliness, godlessness (p.1476)**)

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Order of events

The timing of the events in 18:2 is not clear and, whatever their timing, may be difficult to translate. The question: Is Jethro's **taking** Zipporah related to the past event of Moses sending her back to him at some otherwise unmentioned point in time, or is Jethro's **taking** related to his coming to meet Moses in 18:5.

Verse 11

18:11 is difficult in the original and requires interpretation.

God and Yahweh

In this chapter, God, who is named Yahweh in much of the rest of the book, is mostly referred to as God instead of by his name as is usual. Translations should not suggest that they are not different beings.

Kinship: Father-in-law

Jethro is the father of Moses' wife. Some languages may make a distinction between that and a woman's father-in-law. If that is the case, note it in verses: 1–2, 5–8, 12, 14–15, 17, 24, and 27. (See: **Kinship (p.1391)**)

Participant reference

Jethro is often referred to simply as the father-in-law of Moses in this chapter. He is also named explicitly (referred to by name) an unusually high number of times (it would be more usual to have more pronouns referring to him). Frequent use of his name is likely to emphasize his familial ties and authority (or honored status). Some languages may need to alter the way he is referred to for naturalness or to convey the same sense of familial ties and authority (or honored status).

Exodus 18:1

father-in-law of Moses

The label, **father-in-law of Moses** refers to the father of the wife of Moses. If your language uses a different term for a man's father-in-law than for a woman's father-in-law, choose the appropriate one here. Note the use of this term also in verses: 2, 5–8, 12, 14–15, 17, 24, and 27. Alternate translation: [the father of the wife of Moses] (See: **Kinship (p.1391)**)

Exodus 18:2

And Jethro, father-in-law of Moses, took Zipporah, wife of Moses

This could mean: (1) Jethro took Zipporah to Moses, or (2) Jethro had earlier welcomed back Zipporah.

after he had sent her back

This is something Moses had done earlier. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [after Moses had sent her home to her father] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 18:3

and her two sons

This is the ending of the sentence that begins with the words **Jethro ... took Zipporah** in 18:2. This could mean: (1) Jethro took Zipporah and her two sons to Moses, or (2) Jethro had earlier welcomed back Zipporah and her two sons.

was Gershom

Gershom is a son of Moses and Zipporah; his name means “foreigner.” See 2:22. (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 1367)**)

Exodus 18:4

was Eliezer

Eliezer is a son of Moses and Zipporah; his name means “God is the one who helps me.” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

from the sword of Pharaoh

The phrase **from the sword of Pharaoh** represents being killed by Pharaoh or Pharaoh’s army. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [from being killed by Pharaoh] or [from being killed by Pharaoh’s army] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 18:5

and his sons

Alternate translation: [with his sons]

Exodus 18:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 18:7

and he bowed down and kissed him

These were symbolic acts that were the normal way that people showed great respect and devotion in that culture. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1454)**)

Exodus 18:8

on account of Israel

The word **Israel** represents the Israelite people. Alternate translation: [in order to help the Israelite people] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

all the hardship that found them

Moses writes of **hardships** happening to them as if hardships had discovered where they were. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [all the hardships that had happened to them] or [how they had many hard experiences] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 18:9

from the hand of Egypt

The hand represents the power of someone to do something. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [from the power of the Egyptians] or [from what the Egyptians were doing to them] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 18:10

out of the hand of Egypt and out of the hand of Pharaoh, & from under the hand of Egypt

The hand represents the power of someone to do something. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [from the power of the Egyptians and from the power of Pharaoh ... from the power of the Egyptians] or [from what the Egyptians and Pharaoh were doing to you ... from what the Egyptians were doing to you] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 18:11

because of the affair

Here, **because of the matter** probably refers back to Yahweh's rescue of Israel. Alternate translation: [because of what he did]

in} which they acted proudly against them

The most natural referent for **they** is **the gods**, who, perhaps through their agents (Pharaoh and the Egyptians), fought against Yahweh and oppressed the Israelites (**them**). This would connect back to Exodus 12:12 where Yahweh declares that he is bringing judgment on the gods of Egypt. You may need to make some part of this explicit. Alternate translation: [in which they proudly fought Yahweh by oppressing Israel] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 18:12

before the face of God

Here, **face** represents the presence of God. In this case it likely means that this was a worship event. Alternate translation: [in the presence of God] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 18:13

And so it happened the next day

A new scene begins here, which may need to be marked in a certain way in your language. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

that Moses sat down to judge

Sitting was symbolic of having a position of authority. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [Moses sat down as a judge] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1454)**)

from morning until evening

Alternate translation: [all day]

Exodus 18:14

What is this thing that you are doing with the people

Jethro uses this question to show Moses that what he was doing was not good. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [You should not be doing all of this for the people!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1445)**)

For what purpose do you sit alone, and all the people position themselves next to you from morning until evening

Jethro used this question to show Moses that he was doing too much. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [Why are you doing all this for the people? Why are you doing this by yourself, and why are all the people standing around you from morning until evening, asking you to make decisions for them?] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1445)**)

do you sit alone

The word **sit** here is a metonym for "judge." Judges would sit while they listened to people's complaints. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [do you judge alone] or [are you the only one who judges the people] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

position themselves next to you

The people came to be near Moses so that they could get a chance for him to hear their petitions. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [petition you] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 18:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 18:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 18:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 18:18

You will certainly wear yourself out

Alternate translation: [You will surely make yourself very tired]

is too heavy for you

Jethro speaks of the hard work that Moses is doing as if it were a physical burden that Moses was carrying. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [is too hard for you] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 18:19

I will advise you

Alternate translation: [I will guide you] or [I will instruct you]

and God will be with you

Jethro speaks of God helping Moses as if God would be with Moses. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [God will help you] or [God will give you wisdom] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

and you should bring their disputes to God yourself

Jethro speaks of Moses telling God about their disputes as if they were something that Moses was bringing to God. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and you tell God about their disputes] or and [you tell God what they are arguing about] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 18:20

And you should cause them to know the way they should walk in

Jethro speaks of living or behaving like walking. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [You must show them how to live] or [You must show them how to behave] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 18:21

And you yourself should search out

Alternate translation: [As for you, search out] or [You must also search out]

And you should appoint over them

Jethro speaks of giving them authority over people as putting them over people. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [You should select leaders for the people] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

And you should appoint over them

Here, **them** refers to the Israelites. Moses is advised to place good men in charge of groups of Israelites. Alternate translation: [And you must appoint these men over the Israelites] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

leaders of thousands, leaders of hundreds, leaders of fifties, and leaders of tens

This could mean: (1) these numbers represent the exact amount of people in each group. Alternate translation: [leaders in charge of groups of 1,000 people, groups of 100 people, groups of 50 people, and groups of 10 people] or (2) these numbers are not exact, but represent groups of people of various sizes. Alternate translation: [leaders in charge of very small groups, small groups, large groups, and very large groups] (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

Exodus 18:22

every great situation they will bring to you

By **every great situation they will bring to you**, Jethro is recommending that the new leaders should pass the most difficult cases to Moses for him to judge them. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the difficult cases they will tell you about] or [when there are difficult cases, they will tell you about them so you could judge them] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

And you must lighten {this thing} from on you! And they will carry alongside you

Jethro speaks of the hard work that they would do as if it were something that they would carry beside Moses and make lighter for Moses by helping him. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and lessen your work by having them do the hard work with you] or [and make your work easier by having them help you do the hard work] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 18:23

then you will be able to endure

Alternate translation: [then you will not wear yourself out]

all of this people will go to its place in peace

Here, getting **to their place** could mean each person's home tent or it could mean the whole group gets to the promised land. If you cannot leave it ambiguous, it would be best to indicate something like "harmony in the camp." Alternate translation: [all these people will live in harmony]

Exodus 18:24

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 18:25

heads over the people

Moses writes of the leaders of people as if they were the **head** of a body. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [leaders over the people] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

men of ability

If it would be helpful to your readers, what sort of ability they had can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: [men who were able to lead] or [men who were able to judge] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 1285)**)

leaders of thousands, leaders of hundreds, leaders of fifties, and leaders of tens

This could mean: (1) these numbers represent the exact amount of people in each group. Alternate translation: [leaders in charge of groups of 1,000 people, groups of 100 people, groups of 50 people, and groups of 10 people] or (2) these numbers are not exact, but represent groups of people of various sizes. Alternate translation: [leaders in charge of very small groups, small groups, large groups, and very large groups] See how you translated this in Exodus 18:21. (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

Exodus 18:26

And they judged the people at all times

Alternate translation: [They judged the people most of the time] or [They judged the people in all regular circumstances]

They brought the difficult situations to Moses

The author writes of telling Moses about the difficult cases as bringing him the difficult cases. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [They told Moses about the difficult cases] or [When there were difficult cases, they told Moses about them so that he would judge them] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

small situation

Alternate translation: [easy case]

Exodus 18:27

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 19

Exodus 19 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

This chapter consist of a series of Moses going up Mount Sinai, talking to Yahweh, coming down, and talking to the people. He is being the intermediary, carrying messages between Yahweh and the people. - v. 1–2: Arrival at Sinai - v. 3–8: First cycle of Moses going up and down for instruction and response - v. 9–15: Second cycle, people get ready to hear God - v. 16–19: God speaks to the people from the mountain - v. 20–25: Third cycle

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

“A kingdom of priests”

The function of the priests was to intercede for the people. The Levites were the only priests in Israel; this is a metaphor indicating that the nation was to intercede for the world as a whole. They were also to be holy, or set apart, from the rest of the world. (See: [[rc:///*tw/dict/bible/kt/priest]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor]] and **holy, holiness, unholy, sacred (p.1478)**)

Revealing the law

The events of this chapter are concerned with preparing the people to receive the law of Moses. The people go through all of this to prepare themselves for the law, which shows the great importance of this event for Israel. (See: **law, law of Moses, law of Yahweh, law of God (p.1480)**)

Boundaries between Yahweh and the people

Moses is told to make the people holy in preparation for meeting Yahweh, then boundaries are set up to keep the people separate from Yahweh, and then the priests are told to make themselves holy. The theme of a holy separation is beginning to be developed that will become much of the law code.

Exodus 19:1

In the third month & on the same day

This means they arrived at the wilderness on the first day of the month just as they left Egypt on the first day of the month. The first day of the third month on the Hebrew calendar is near the middle of May on Western calendars. If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use cardinal numbers here. Alternate translation: [In the month 3 ... on the day 1 of the month] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1414)**)

Exodus 19:2

from Rephidim

Rephidim is an area on the edge of the wilderness of Sinai where the people of Israel had been camping. See how you translated this name in Exodus 17:1. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

Exodus 19:3

you shall speak to the house of Jacob, and you shall tell the sons of Israel

These two phrases have exactly the same meaning. This may be for poetic effect, as Yahweh's statement here through 19:6 is somewhat artfully crafted. You may need to use a strategy other than parallelism to achieve a similar poetic effect in your language. (See: **Parallelism (p.1417)**)

Exodus 19:4

You yourselves saw

The word **you** here refers to the Israelites. Yahweh is telling Moses what to tell the Israelites. If your language has a plural form of you, you would need it here. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

how I carried you on the wings of eagles

God speaks of caring for his people while they traveled as if he were an eagle and carried them on his **wings**. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [how I helped you travel like an eagle that carries her babies on her wings] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 19:5

to my voice

God's voice represents what he says. Alternate translation: [to what I say] or [to my words] (See: **Metonymy (p. 1405)**)

and keep my covenant

Alternate translation: [and do what my covenant requires you to do]

possession

Alternate translation: [treasure]

Exodus 19:6

my kingdom of priests

God speaks of his people as if they were **priests**. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [my kingdom of people who are like priests] or [my kingdom of people who do what priests do] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 19:7

And he set before their faces all these words

Moses setting the words before them means that he was telling people things. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And he told them all these words] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

before their faces

Here, **face** means the person. Alternate translation: [before them] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

all these words that Yahweh had commanded him

Alternate translation: [all that Yahweh had commanded him]

Exodus 19:8

And Moses brought the words of the people back

If it would be helpful to your readers, where Moses went can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: [Moses went back up the mountain to report the words of the people] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 1285)**)

the words of the people

Here, **words** refers to what the people said. Alternate translation: [what the people said] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 19:9

the words of the people

Here, **words** refers to what the people said. Alternate translation: [what the people said] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 19:10

and make them holy

This may mean instruct the people, or it may mean Moses will have a role as well. Alternate translation: [and tell them to dedicate themselves to me] or [and help them to purify themselves for me]

Exodus 19:11

before the eyes

Here, **before the eyes** means “so they can see.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. See the UST. (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 19:12

And you shall set boundaries

The **boundary** was either a mark or some kind of barrier.

saying, ‘Watch yourselves

A second-level direct quotation begins with **watch**. It is not clear where this command that Moses is to give the Israelites ends. Most English translations end it in 19:13 before the last sentence. For that reason, it may be most helpful to translate the instruction as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: [telling them to watch themselves] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1439)**)

Watch yourselves climbing on the mountain or touching on its edge

Here, the negative command is implied from the **watch yourselves** command. Alternate translation: [Watch yourselves against climbing on the mountain or touching on its edge]

Every mountain toucher & certainly

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [You must surely put to death any person who touches the mountain] or [You must surely kill anyone who touches the mountain] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 19:13

No hand shall touch that one

Here, **hand** is a metonym for any part of a person. Alternate translation: [No person shall touch that one] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

he shall be stoned or he shall be shot

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [you must certainly stone or shoot him] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

he shall be shot

This refers to being killed by someone who shoots arrows from a bow.

shall ascend

If you translate this with come or go, consider which would be the correct perspective for your language and the text context. Yahweh is speaking, so “come up” is valid; however, the people will be the ones moving, so “go up” is valid as well. (See: **Go and Come (p.1362)**)

Exodus 19:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 19:15

you shall not come near to a woman

This is a polite way of talking about sexual relations. If this would be misunderstood in your language, use a different polite way of referring to this or you could state this plainly. Alternate translation: [do not sleep with your wives] (See: **Euphemism (p.1345)**)

a woman

This word means both “woman” and “wife.” Context dictates the correct translation. Since wife would make it a narrower command, **woman** was chosen here.

Exodus 19:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 19:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 19:18

Yahweh descended

Alternate translation: [Yahweh came down]

like the smoke of a furnace

This shows that it was a very large amount of smoke. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent comparison or express this meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [like the smoke from a very large fire] (See: **Simile (p.1449)**)

Exodus 19:19

went very strong

Alternate translation: [continued to become louder and louder]

in a voice

The word **voice** here refers to a sound that God made. This could mean: (1) “by speaking loudly like thunder” or (2) “by speaking” or (3) “by causing thunder to sound” (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 19:20

And & descended & And & ascended

You may need to consider your language's rules for perspective regarding going or coming up or down in this verse. (See: **Go and Come (p.1362)**)

Exodus 19:21

lest they break through

God spoke about walking past the boundary as if they might break down a barrier and walk through it. See how you translated “set bounds” in Exodus 19:12. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [not to go beyond the boundary] or [not to go through the barrier] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

and & fall

Here, **fall** refers to dying. This is a polite way of referring to something unpleasant. If this would be misunderstood in your language, use a different polite way of referring to this or you could state this plainly. (See: **Euphemism (p. 1345)**)

Exodus 19:22

Yahweh bursts out against them

Yahweh's anger and judgment are pictured as something that will **burst** through a boundary. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Yahweh kills them in anger] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 19:23

us, saying: ‘Set boundaries on the mountain and set it apart

This quoted command could be translated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: [us to set boundaries on the mountain to keep it separate] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1439)**)

Exodus 19:24

Go, climb down

Alternate translation: [Go down]

shall not break through

God spoke about walking past the boundary as if they might **break** down a barrier and walk through it. See how you translated a similar phrase in Exodus 19:21. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [must not go beyond the boundary] or [must not go through the barrier] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

he burst out against them

Yahweh's anger and judgment are pictured as something that will **burst** forth from him. See how you translated a similar phrase in Exodus 19:22. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [he kill them in anger] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 19:25

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 20

Exodus 20 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

- v. 1–17: Yahweh gives the Ten Commandments
- v. 18–21: the people react
- v. 22–26: Yahweh gives a little more explanation about idols and altars

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Covenant

Yahweh's covenant faithfulness is now based on the covenant he made with Abraham as well as the covenant he is making with Moses. (See: [[rc:*///tw/dict/bible/kt/covenantfaith]] and [[rc:*///tw/dict/bible/kt/covenant]])

Form of you

The singular form of you is used in the commandments; however, the commandments applied to the whole Israelite community. There is both a singular and a corporate aspect to them. You may need to choose between singular and plural if your language makes that distinction. (See: **Singular Pronouns that refer to Groups (p. 1452)**)

Exodus 20:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 20:2

from the house of slavery

Yahweh speaks of **Egypt** as if it were a **house** where people keep slaves. See how you translated this in Exodus 13:3. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [from the place where you were slaves] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 20:3

There shall not be to you other gods above my face

Alternate translation: [You must not worship any other gods besides me]

Exodus 20:4

or the likeness of anything that is in heaven above or that is in the earth beneath or that is in the water under the earth

This list means all created things wherever they are. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [nor anything that looks like anything created, whether that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth] (See: **Merism (p.1397)**)

or the likeness of anything

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **likeness**, you can express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [nor anything looking like something] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

Exodus 20:5

to them

Here, **them** refers to carved figures or idols. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

the sons on the third and on the fourth

Alternate translation: [Generation] is implied by **sons**, therefore **third and fourth** refers to the grandchildren and great-grandchildren. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: [the sons down to the third and fourth generations] or [and even on the grandchildren and great-grandchildren] (See: **Ellipsis (p.1340)**)

on the third and on the fourth

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use cardinal numbers here. Alternate translation: [to generations 3 and 4] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1414)**)

Exodus 20:6

But I show covenant faithfulness to thousands, to lovers of me

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **faithfulness**, you can express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [I am faithful to the covenant with thousands of those who love me] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

to thousands

Alternate translation: [Generation] is implied by the previous verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply necessary words from the context. Alternate translation: [to the thousandth generation] or [for a thousand generations] (See: **Ellipsis (p.1340)**)

to thousands, to lovers of me

Here, **thousands** may mean: (1) “forever,” that is, “to all descendants forever” (2) a number too many to count. Alternate translation: [for every generation] or [forever to innumerable people who love me] (See: **Metonymy (p. 1405)**)

Exodus 20:7

You shall & lift up & lifts up

To **lift up**, take, or use the name of Yahweh (with emptiness, i.e. improperly) covers many sorts of speaking or invoking his name or making a claim to him or attempting to manipulate him or misrepresenting him. A broad word should be used in translation of this term.

You shall not lift up the name of Yahweh your God

Alternate translation: [You must not use the name of Yahweh your God]

with emptiness, & with emptiness

Alternate translation: [carelessly] or [without proper respect]

will not leave unpunished

If this double negative would be misunderstood in your language, you could translate it as a positive statement.
Alternate translation: [I will certainly consider guilty] (See: **Double Negatives (p.1335)**)

Exodus 20:8

to set it apart to me

Alternate translation: [to make it holy to me] or [to consecrate it to me]

Exodus 20:9

your work

Alternate translation: [your occupation] or [your livelihood]

Exodus 20:10

within your gates

Cities often had walls around them to keep out enemies, and gates for people to go in and out. Anyone who was inside the gates was part of the community. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [within your community] or [inside your city] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 20:11

on the seventh day

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use cardinal numbers here. Alternate translation: [on day seven] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1414)**)

Exodus 20:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 20:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 20:14

You shall not commit adultery

Alternate translation: [You must not have sex with anyone other than your spouse]

Exodus 20:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 20:16

You shall not testify false testimony against your neighbor

Alternate translation: [You must not speak a false report against your neighbor]

Exodus 20:17

You shall not covet

Alternate translation: [You must not strongly want to have] or [You must not want to take]

Exodus 20:18

the mountain smoking

Alternate translation: [the smoky mountain]

and they trembled

Alternate translation: [and they shook with fear]

and they stood from a distance

Alternate translation: [and stood far away]

Exodus 20:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 20:20

so that the fear of him may be above your faces and so that you do not sin

Alternate translation: [so that you will honor him and not sin]

the fear of him may be above your faces

Here, **fear** is spoken of as something that could be **above their faces**. This means that they would be continually thinking about honoring God. It is similar to the image in Exodus 13:16. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [you will live always reverencing him] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 20:21

and Moses approached

Alternate translation: [and Moses moved closer,]

Exodus 20:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 20:23

gods of silver or gods of gold

Alternate translation: [gods made out of silver or gold] or [idols made out of silver or gold]

Exodus 20:24

an altar of earth

The phrase **an altar of earth** means an altar made of materials from the ground, such as stone, soil, or clay.

I cause my name to be remembered

Here, **name** is a metonym for God's being. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [I cause myself to be remembered] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

I cause my name to be remembered

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [I choose for you to remember me] (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1280)**)

Exodus 20:25

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 20:26

And you shall not go up to my altar on steps

If you need to connect this statement more explicitly to the previous statements regarding building the alter, you could add a phrase about building steps. Alternate translation: [Do not build steps up to the altar and go up to it on those steps] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

so that your nakedness is not exposed over it

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [so that you do not expose your nakedness over it] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

your nakedness

Alternate translation: [your private parts]

Exodus 21

Exodus 21 Chapter Introduction

This chapter begins to give the Israelite civil case law, that is, the explanation of how to apply the principles condensed in the ten commandments.

Structure and Formatting

- 1: Introduction
- 2–6: Laws regarding male slaves
- 7–11: Laws regarding female slaves
- 12–17: Capital crimes
- 18–36: Liability laws
    - 18–27: Regarding human violence
    - 28–36: Regarding damage done by or to animals

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Hypothetical situations

Throughout the case law, a hypothetical situation is introduced with “when” or “if.” It is followed by a description of the situation; then there is the penalty or action to be taken in those situations. A hypothetical person may be introduced with “anyone” or “whoever.” Most verses for the next several chapters will have these hypothetical situations. See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1318)** Translators familiar with Hebrew may want to notice that, generally, major divisions are introduced by כִּי (ki) and minor divisions within a topic are introduced by אִם (’im).

Passive construction

Many portions of these situations are written in the passive voice. Some languages may have to change all or some of these to active voice. See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**.

Daughters sold as servants

The section from 21:7–11 may be somewhat confusing because a daughter that is sold as a servant is seamlessly connected to her becoming someone’s wife. It seems the two things could be closely related.

Ransom payment

In 21:30 a man whose bull killed someone may evade the death penalty by paying a ransom price, but the conditions for that happening are not clear.

Exodus 21:1

Yahweh continues speaking to Moses. There is no quote break between chapters.

you shall set

Alternate translation: [you must give] or [you must tell]

before their faces

Here, **faces** represents the presence of the nation. Alternate translation: [before them] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 21:2

General Information:

Here Yahweh begins telling Moses his laws for the people of Israel.

If you buy a Hebrew servant

This is the first of many hypothetical situations, introduced by “when” or **if,** which you will encounter over the next several chapters. See the Chapter 21 Introduction. You will need to translate these consistently in a manner that expresses that these situations have not happened. (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1318)**)

Exodus 21:3

If he came by himself, he shall go free by himself

What **by himself** means can be stated clearly. Some languages require that the additional condition, that he marries while a slave, be stated clearly. Alternate translation: [If he became a slave while he had no wife, and if he marries while he is a slave, the master need only free the man] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

by himself, & by himself

Alternate translation: [alone] or [without a wife]

if he is the husband of a wife

Alternate translation: [if he was married when he became a slave] or [if he came as a married man]

Exodus 21:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 21:5

plainly says

Alternate translation: [makes a statement, saying]

I shall not go out free

Alternate translation: [I do not want my master to set me free]

Exodus 21:6

God

The word for **God** at its most literal means “great ones.” Here it may have this basic meaning and refer to human judges or other leaders in Israel. It may also be a metonym and refer to the judges because they represent God to the people and have his authority. Texts other than the standard Hebrew text support this reading. See Exodus 22:8–9 for another example of this. Alternate translation: [the judges] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

and & shall bore his ear through

Alternate translation: [and … will put a hole in his ear]

with an awl

An **awl** is a pointed tool used to make a hole

forever

Alternate translation: [until the end of his life] or [until he dies]

Exodus 21:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 21:8

This verse is the first of three possible situations between a master and his female slave.

has appointed her

Alternate translation: [has chosen her]

then he shall cause her to be ransomed

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [then he must allow her father to buy her back] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

since he has acted treacherously with her

Alternate translation: [since he has deceived her]

Exodus 21:9

This verse is the second of three possible situations between a master and his female slave.

he appoints her for his son

Alternate translation: [he decides that she is the one who will be his son's wife]

he shall act toward her according to the custom of daughters

Alternate translation: [he must do to her according to the manner in which daughters are customarily treated]

Exodus 21:10

This verse and the next are the third of three possible situations between a master and his female slave.

he shall not diminish her food, her clothing, or her marital rights

If this double negative would be misunderstood in your language, you could translate it as a positive statement. Alternate translation: [he must give the first wife the same food, clothing, and marital rights she had before] (See: **Double Negatives (p.1335)**)

or her marital rights

This term only occurs here in the Bible. It probably means things that a husband must do for his wife. Most commentators believe it specifically means having sexual relations with her, possibly so that she can bear children. Alternate translation: [or her right to intimacy] or [or her childbearing rights] (See: **Euphemism (p.1345)**)

Exodus 21:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 21:12

Whoever strikes a man

Alternate translation: [Whoever attacks a man]

he shall surely be put to death

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [you must certainly execute that person] or [you must certainly kill that person] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 21:13

But if he did not lie in wait

Alternate translation: [But if he did not plan to do it] or [But if he did not do it on purpose]

then I will appoint a place for you where he can flee

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express the purpose for choosing a place explicitly. Alternate translation: [I will choose a place to which he can run away to be safe] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 21:14

with cunning

Alternate translation: [after thinking carefully about it]

then you shall take him

The word “him” refers to the one who killed his neighbor.

for execution

Alternate translation: [to execute him]

Exodus 21:15

Whoever hits his father or his mother shall surely be put to death

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [If anyone hits his father or mother, you must surely put him to death] or [You must surely kill anyone who hits his father or mother] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

surely

Alternate translation: [certainly]

Exodus 21:16

he shall surely be put to death

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [you must kill that kidnapper] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 21:17

Whoever acts contemptuously toward his father or his mother shall surely be put to death

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [You must surely kill anyone who curses his father or his mother] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Whoever acts contemptuously toward

The word translated **acts contemptuously** means the opposite of “honor” (as in the commandment to honor one’s parents). Alternate translation: [Whoever acts dishonorably toward]

Exodus 21:18

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 21:19

he rises

Alternate translation: [he gets better]

then & is free

Alternate translation: [then ... is innocent]

for his sitting

This refers to a situation when someone cannot work to earn money. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [for the time he could not work] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

and for his complete healing

Alternate translation: [and for his medical costs] or [and for his costs for healing]

Exodus 21:20

under his hand

Alternate translation: [because of the injury] or [because the master hit him]

he shall certainly be avenged

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [you must certainly punish that man] (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1280)**)

Exodus 21:21

for he is his silver

A common view is that the loss of the valuable property, the slave, is itself a punishment. It may be that the master loses the slave for a time and also has to pay for his healing, or it may be that the slave dies after a few days. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that the servant was valuable to his master explicitly. Alternate translation: [because he has already lost his servant who was valuable to him] or [because he has already lost his servant's work for a time and had to pay for his healing] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 1285)**)

Exodus 21:22

and her children come out, but there is no serious injury

It is not clear in the passage what happens to the child. The text is simply as in the ULT. Some have taken it to mean that the child dies because of premature birth, and the **serious injury** only relates to the woman. In this case, a fine is imposed for the loss of the child. However, the text could also mean that the child is born safely. A fine is still imposed because of the great danger to the two lives. Then the next few verses give consequences for any injury either to mother or child.

serious injury

Alternate translation: [hurt]

then he shall surely be fined

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [you must certainly fine the guilty man] or [the guilty man must pay a fine] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

according to the judges

Alternate translation: [what the judges decide]

Exodus 21:23

then you shall give a life for a life

This means that if someone is hurt, the person who caused the hurt must be hurt in the same way. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [you must take the killer's life for the murdered person's life] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 21:24

an eye for an eye

This means that if someone is hurt, the person who caused the hurt must be hurt in the same way. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [the striker's eye for the injured person's eye] (and repeated in like manner for each example throughout this and the next verse) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 21:25

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 21:26

a man

Here, **man** refers to the owner of a slave.

in compensation for

Alternate translation: [as payment for]

Exodus 21:27

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 21:28

an ox gores

Alternate translation: [an ox injures with its horns]

the ox shall surely be stoned

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [you must surely stone the ox to death] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

and its flesh shall not be eaten

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [and you must not eat its flesh] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 21:29

and its owner was warned but did not keep it in

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state **its owner was warned** in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [and someone warned its owner but he did not keep it in] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

and its owner was warned but did not keep it in

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express the content of the warning explicitly. Alternate translation: [and its owner was warned that it gores but he did not keep it in] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

and its owner also shall be put to death

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [and you must also kill its owner] (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1280)**)

Exodus 21:30

If a ransom is imposed on him, he shall give the ransom of his life, according to all that is imposed on him

The text does not specify who will impose a ransom on the ox's owner. Since other texts indicate that justice is retributive and performed by the dead person's family, that is one option. Another option is that the judges will impose it. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express one of these explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

If a ransom is imposed on him, & is imposed on him

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. However, you must make a decision regarding who is imposing the ransom or use an unspecified pronoun, if that is possible in your language (this second option would not make sense in English). Alternate translation: [If the judges impose a ransom on him ... they impose on him] (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1280)**)

Exodus 21:31

it gores & it gores

Alternate translation: [it injures with its horns ... it injures with its horns]

to him

Here, **him** probably refers to the ox's owner. Alternate translation: [to the owner] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

Exodus 21:32

thirty silver shekels

In ancient times, a silver shekel weighed about 11 grams or about a third of an ounce. You could try to express the equivalent in terms of modern money values, but if you did, that could cause your Bible translation to become outdated and inaccurate, since those values can change over time. Instead, you could say something general like “30 silver coins” or give the equivalent weight or use the biblical term in the text and explain the weight in a footnote. Alternate translation: [330 grams of silver] (See: **Biblical Money (p.1295)**)

If the ox gores a male servant

Because they are to kill the ox, the slave must have died. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [If an ox kills a male servant] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

and the ox shall be stoned

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [you must kill the ox by stoning it] (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1280)**)

Exodus 21:33

opens a cistern

Alternate translation: [uncovers a hole in the ground] or [takes a cover off a hole in the ground]

Exodus 21:34

He shall cause silver to return to its owner

The owner must be paid for the loss of his animal. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [he must pay the owner for the dead animal] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

shall compensate

Alternate translation: [must make restitution]

and the dead animal shall become his

The one who paid for the loss of the animal will become the owner of the dead animal and can do what he wants with it. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [and the dead animal will belong to the owner of the pit] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 21:35

and divide its silver

Alternate translation: [and divide the money] or [and divide the money they receive]

Exodus 21:36

If it was known

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

the ox had a habit of goring in the past

Alternate translation: [the ox had gored other animals before]

and its owner has not kept it in

This means that the owner did not keep his ox safely where it could not wander to hurt other animals. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [and its owner did not keep it inside a fence] or [and its owner did not tie it securely] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 1285)**)

he shall surely compensate ox for ox

The owner of the ox that killed must give an ox to the man who lost his ox. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [the owner of the ox that killed must surely give a living ox to the owner of the ox that died] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 22

Exodus 22 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

This chapter continues the list of case laws for Israel. We will not attempt to provide an outline since almost every verse is about a different case.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Hypothetical situations

Throughout the case law a hypothetical situation is introduced with “when” or “if.” Then there is a description of the situation, and then there is the penalty or action to be taken in those situations. A hypothetical person may be introduced with “anyone” or “whoever.” Most verses for the next several chapters will contain these hypothetical situations. See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1318)** Translators familiar with Hebrew may want to notice that, generally, major divisions are introduced by כִּי (ki) and minor divisions within a topic are introduced by אִם (’im).

Passive construction

Many portions of these situations are written in the passive voice. Some languages may have to change all or some of these to active voice. See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**.

Exodus 22:1

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses his laws for the people of Israel.

If a man steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters it or sells it

This is the first of many hypothetical situations in this chapter, introduced by “when” or **if,** which you will encounter over the next several chapters. See the Chapter 22 Introduction. You will need to translate these consistently in a manner that expresses that these situations have not actually happened. (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1318)**)

five & and four

Alternate translation: [5 ... and 4] (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

Exodus 22:2

If a thief is found while breaking in

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [If anyone finds a thief while he is breaking in] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

while breaking in

Alternate translation: [while using force to enter a house]

and he is struck and he dies

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [if anyone strikes the thief so that he dies] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

there is no bloodguilt for him

Alternate translation: [no one will be guilty of murdering him]

Exodus 22:3

But if the sun has risen on him

Alternate translation: [But if it is light before he breaks in] or [But if he breaks in and it is after sunrise]

then he shall be sold for his theft

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [you must sell him as a slave in order to pay for what he stole] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 22:4

If the stolen thing is actually found alive in his hand

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [If they find that he still has the live animal that he stole] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

he shall compensate double

The meaning of **compensate double** is not entirely clear. Most interpretations follow the UST, that is, two animals total must be given, the stolen one and one more. Some interpret double to mean the thief must pay two animals for every animal that he took, so three total. It would be best to leave double as ambiguous as possible. Alternate translation: [he must compensate twice what he stole]

Exodus 22:5

causes & to graze & and it grazes

Alternate translation: [causes to eat plants ... and it eats plants]

his livestock & it

Livestock is a collective singular noun that could refer to cows, goats, sheep, or basically any domesticated animals. In some languages you will need to translate it as a plural. (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1304)**)

he shall compensate

Alternate translation: [he must pay back the owner of that field]

Exodus 22:6

If a fire breaks out and spreads in thorns and & is consumed

Here, **breaks out** and **consumes** can be stated in active form or in another way that is natural in your language if your language does not use the passive form in this way. Alternate translation: [If someone starts a fire, and it spreads in thorns, and it consumes] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

and spreads in thorns

Alternate translation: [and moves along the ground through dry plants]

stacked grain

This is grain that has been cut and tied in bundles. Alternate translation: [bundled grain] or [harvested grain] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

the standing grain

This is grain that has not been cut, but it is ready to be harvested. Alternate translation: [the grain still growing in the field] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 22:7

for safekeeping

Alternate translation: [to watch over it] or [to keep it safe]

and if it is stolen

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [if someone steals it] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

if the thief is found

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [if you find the thief] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 22:8

If the thief is not found, then the owner of the house shall be brought to God

You may need to translate these in an active voice if your language does not use passive in this way. Alternate translation: [If no one finds the thief, bring the owner of the house to God] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

God

The word for **God** at its most literal means “great ones.” Here and in the next verse it may have this basic meaning and refer to human judges or other leaders in Israel. It may also be a metonym and refer to the judges because they represent God to the people and have his authority. See Exodus 21:6 for another example of this. Alternate translation: [the judges] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

he has stretched out his hand against the property of his neighbor

This is an idiom for stealing. If you have a way of saying this in your language, you can use it here. Alternate translation: [he has stolen his neighbor’s property] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Exodus 22:9

matter of & the matter of

Alternate translation: [dispute of ... the dispute of]

Surely this is it

Alternate translation: [This is mine] or [This is my missing property]

God. & God

The word used here for **God**, at its most literal, means “great ones.” Here and in the previous verse it may have this basic meaning and refer to human judges or other leaders in Israel. It may also be a metonym and refer to the judges because they represent God to the people and have his authority. See Exodus 21:6 for another example of this. Alternate translation: [the judges] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 22:10

or is hurt & is carried away

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language, as modeled in the UST. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

is carried away

Here, **carried away** means that it is not a thief but a wild animal that takes the ox or sheep away (to eat it). See 22:12 for cases where the animal is stolen while in another's care.

Exodus 22:11

there shall be an oath of Yahweh between both of them, & Its owner must accept

Only the man who is accused of stealing the animal must swear the oath. The owner of the lost animal must accept the oath that has been sworn. If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [the man who was caring for the animal must swear an oath before Yahweh ... and the owner must accept that oath] (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1280)**)

Exodus 22:12

But if it was truly stolen from him

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [But if someone stole the animal from him] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 22:13

If it was truly torn

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [But if a wild beast tore the animal in pieces] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 22:14

he shall surely compensate

Alternate translation: [must certainly repay with another animal] or [must certainly pay the owner for the animal]

and it is injured or dies

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language, as modeled in the UST. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 22:15

if & was for hire

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [if someone rented the animal] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

it came for its hiring fee

The one who borrowed the animal will not have to pay the owner anything more than the hiring or rental fee. This fee will pay for the loss of the animal. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [the money that someone paid to rent the animal will cover the loss of the animal] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

for its hiring fee

Alternate translation: [for its rental fee] or [for the money paid to rent the animal]

Exodus 22:16

If a man seduces a virgin who is not engaged

Alternate translation: [If a man persuades a virgin who is not engaged that she wants to lie with him]

not engaged

Alternate translation: [not promised to be married]

and if he lies

Lying with someone refers to having sex. This is a polite way of referring to something unpleasant. If this would be misunderstood in your language, use a different polite way of referring to this or you could state this plainly.
Alternate translation: [if he has sex with her] (See: **Euphemism (p.1345)**)

he shall surely pay her bride price

The **bride price** was money paid to the family to compensate for the loss of their daughter.

Exodus 22:17

to him, he shall weigh out

Here, **him** and **he** refer back to the man who seduced the virgin. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

Exodus 22:18

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 22:19

Any lier with an animal

This refers to sexual relations. This is a polite way of referring to something unpleasant. If this would be misunderstood in your language, use a different polite way of referring to this or you could state this plainly. Alternate translation: [Whoever has sexual relations with an animal] (See: **Euphemism (p.1345)**)

Any lier with an animal shall surely be put to death

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state **be put to death** in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [You must surely execute whoever lies with an animal] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 22:20

shall be completely destroyed

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation (placed at the beginning of the sentence): [You must completely destroy] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 22:21

You shall not wrong

Alternate translation: [You must not mistreat] or [You must not cheat]

for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt

The Israelites are called to remember their previous condition, that they lived as foreign guests in Egypt. They came first to avoid the famine in Jacob and Joseph's time and were dependent on Egyptian hospitality. Later they were wronged and oppressed, and they are not to do that to those who sojourn with them. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [for you were wronged and oppressed as sojourners in the land of Egypt] or [for you also depended on hospitality while you lived as sojourners in Egypt]
(See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 22:22

You shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child

If this double negative would be misunderstood in your language, you could translate it as a positive statement.
Alternate translation: [You must treat all widows and fatherless children fairly] (See: **Double Negatives (p.1335)**)

widow

Alternate translation: [woman whose husband has died]

or fatherless child

Alternate translation: [or child with no parents]

Exodus 22:23

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 22:24

and my nose will burn

This is an idiom meaning that Yahweh will be angry. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: [and I will became very angry] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

with the sword

To be killed **with the sword** is a metonym that means a person will die violently, perhaps while fighting in a war. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [violently] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 22:25

like a creditor

Alternate translation: [like one who lends money]

you shall not put interest on him

Alternate translation: [you must not charge him extra money for borrowing] or [you must not charge him extra money for the loan]

Exodus 22:26

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 22:27

is his only covering

Alternate translation: [is his only coat] or [is his only garment to keep him warm]

In what will he lie down

This question adds emphasis. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [He will have nothing to wear while he sleeps!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1445)**)

Exodus 22:28

You shall not act contemptuously toward God

Alternate translation: [Do not insult God] or [Do not speak evil about God]

and you shall not curse a ruler of your people

Alternate translation: [and do not ask God to do bad things to your ruler]

Exodus 22:29

You shall not hold back

If this double negative would be misunderstood in your language, you could translate it as a positive statement.
Alternate translation: [You must bring all of your offerings] (See: **Double Negatives (p.1335)**)

Exodus 22:30

Seven

Alternate translation: [7] (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

on the eighth day

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use cardinal numbers here. Alternate translation: [on day 8] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1414)**)

Exodus 22:31

And you shall be men of holiness to me

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **holiness**, you can express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [And you shall be holy men to men] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

Exodus 23

Exodus 23 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

This chapter continues the list of case laws for Israel. It also touches on the patterns of life regarding the Sabbaths (23:10–12) and Festivals (23:14–19). At 23:20 Yahweh begins telling them about their future as they go to and live in the promised land.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Celebrations of feasts and festivals

The people of Israel were required to celebrate certain feasts and festivals. These were part of the law of Moses, and some are described in this chapter. Their purpose was to worship Yahweh and to remember the great things Yahweh has done for them.

Exodus 23:1

General Information:

Yahweh continues telling Moses his laws for the people of Israel.

You shall not take up a report of emptiness

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **report** and **emptiness**, you can express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [You must not report emptily] or [You must not report falsely] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

a report of emptiness

Alternate translation: [a false testimony]

You shall not put your hand with the wicked

Here, to **put your hand with the wicked** means to support the lies that he is telling in order to harm someone else. The image is of putting out your hand to help him, to make him stronger than he would be on his own. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: [You must not assist the wicked] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

a witness of violence

Here, **violence** can also mean “wrong.” Either way, it means to harm another person by committing injustice (violence to justice) by lying. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [a false witness] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 23:2

nor shall you testify

Alternate translation: [and you also must not speak]

You shall not follow a crowd into evil

This is a metaphor that describes one's agreeing with a group of people as if he actually walked behind that group. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [You must not do the evil that the crowd wants] or [You must not agree with the majority for evil] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

to turn aside & that turns aside

The phrase "from justice" is omitted twice but should be understood in both cases. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: [to turn aside from justice ... that turns aside from justice] (See: **Ellipsis (p.1340)**)

to turn aside & that turns aside

Here, **to turn aside** means to do illegal or immoral actions that result in an unjust ruling. Alternate translation: [to pervert justice ... that perverts justice]

Exodus 23:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 23:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 23:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 23:6

You shall not turn aside justice for your poor in his lawsuit

Alternate translation: [Do not decide to treat a poor man unjustly in legal matters]

in his lawsuit

Here, **in his lawsuit** refers to any matter that a court decides.

Exodus 23:7

You shall be far from a word of deception

Here distance is used to tell the Israelites to have no part in deception. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Do not speak deceptively] or [Do not join a false matter] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

and & the innocent or righteous

These two terms mean very similar things, both of which contrast with **the wicked** later in the verse. If your language does not use repetition in this way, you can combine these phrases. Alternate translation: [and ... the person who has not done anything wrong or the person who always does what is right] or [and ... the person who does right and not wrong] (See: **Doublet (p.1338)**)

I will not justify the wicked

Alternate translation: [I will not find the wicked not guilty] or [I will not say that a wicked person is innocent]

Exodus 23:8

for the bribe blinds the clear-sighted, and it perverts the words of the righteous

Here, a “bribe” is described as if it could take action itself that negatively affects justice. If this might be confusing for your readers, you could express this meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [for if you do, an evil person can give money to blind the clear-sighted and to pervert the words of the righteous] (See: **Personification (p.1420)**)

for the bribe blinds the clear-sighted, and it perverts the words of the righteous

To **blind the clear-sighted** is a metaphor that means causing those who know what is right to act like they do not. And **perverts the words of the righteous** could mean causes those who would speak the truth (in court) to lie or causes the judge to give an evil judgment or causes those listening to **the words of the righteous** to choose to act as if they had heard something different. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [for a bribe causes those who understand the right thing to do not to do it and causes good men to speak lies] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 23:9

the soul of the foreigner

Alternate translation: [the feelings of the foreigner]

Exodus 23:10

its produce

Alternate translation: [the food its plants produce]

And six

Alternate translation: [And 6] (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

Exodus 23:11

But the seventh

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use cardinal numbers here. Alternate translation: [But year 7] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1414)**)

you shall let it drop and leave it alone

This means to leave the land fallow, that is, in its natural state, unplowed, unplanted, not used to grow food. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

and the poor of your people shall eat

The poor can eat any food that grows on its own in a field that is not cultivated. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [so the poor among your people may harvest and eat any food that grows on its own in that field] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 23:12

your ox and your donkey

Alternate translation: [your work animals]

Six

Alternate translation: [6] (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

and on the seventh day

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use cardinal numbers here. Alternate translation: [and on day 7] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1414)**)

and the son of your female slave and the sojourner may be refreshed

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [and the son of your female slave and the sojourner may refresh themselves] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 23:13

You shall take heed to

Alternate translation: [Do] or [Obey]

You shall not mention the names of other gods, nor let them be heard on your mouth

These two instructions mean almost the same thing. If saying the same thing twice might be confusing for your readers, you can combine the phrases into one. Alternate translation: [Be sure never to speak the names of other gods] (See: **Parallelism (p.1417)**)

You shall not mention the names of other gods, nor let them be heard on your mouth

These parallel phrases probably mean praying to other gods. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [Do not pray to other gods, never let me hear you do that] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

nor let them be heard on your mouth

To be **on your mouth** means to speak. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [nor speak them] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

nor let them be heard on your mouth

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Also see previous note. Alternate translation: [nor speak them so someone could hear them] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 23:14

three

Alternate translation: [3] (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

Exodus 23:15

Aviv

Aviv is the name of the first month of the Hebrew calendar. Aviv is during the last part of March and the first part of April on Western calendars. See how you translated this in Exodus 13:4. You could convert the Hebrew day and month into an approximate date on the calendar that your culture uses. However, the Jews used a lunar calendar, so if you use a solar calendar, the date will be different every year and the translation will not be entirely accurate. So you may just want to give the number of the day and the name of the month on the Hebrew calendar, and say approximately what time of year that is on your calendar in a footnote. (See: **Hebrew Months (p.1364)**)

seven

Alternate translation: [7] (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

And you shall not appear at my face empty-handed

Understatement is used here to emphasize that the Israelites must bring a suitable offering to Yahweh. If this double negative would be misunderstood in your language, you could translate it as a positive statement. Alternate translation: [Every single time you worship me you must bring an offering] (See: **Double Negatives (p. 1335)**)

Exodus 23:16

And {you shall keep} the Festival of the Harvest

Elsewhere this is called the “Festival of Weeks.” See Exodus 34:22 and Deuteronomy 16:9 and following.

And {you shall keep} the Festival of the Gathering

This festival celebrated the final harvesting of all the crops for the year. This festival was also known as the Festival of Shelters or the Festival of Booths. The idea came from the practice of the farmers living in temporary booths, or huts, out in the fields to guard the crop as it ripened. See Deuteronomy 16:13. Alternate translation: [And the Festival of the Ingathering]

in the exiting of the year

The phrase **in the exiting of the year** means at the end of the year. The year is pictured as something that is leaving. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [as the year goes out] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 23:17

shall appear to the face of the Lord Yahweh

Here, to **appear to the face of the Lord Yahweh** means to gather to worship. **To the face** is a metonym for Yahweh's presence, referring to worship. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [must come to worship the Lord Yahweh] (See: **Metonymy (p. 1405)**)

Exodus 23:18

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 23:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 23:20

before your face

This means “in front of you.” Alternate translation: [in front of you] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 23:21

Be guarded from his face

This means to respect him; **from his face** refers to his person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [Show respect to him] (See: **Metonymy (p. 1405)**)

Be guarded from his face

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [Pay attention to him] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Do not cause bitterness in him, for he will not bear with your transgressions, for my name is within him

There are two reasons given for the instruction **do not cause bitterness in him**. They are connected in such a way that you could say: “Because my name is within him, he will not forgive your transgressions; therefore, do not cause bitterness in him.” The relation of the **name** and **forgiveness** is not explicit. Alternate translation: [If you provoke him, he will not pardon your sins, for my name is within him] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1320)**)

my name is within him

Here, **name** refers to God’s authority. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [he has my authority] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

and listen to his voice

Here, **voice** represents what the angel says. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [and obey what he says] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 23:22

if you indeed heed his voice

Here, **voice** represents what the angel says. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [if you carefully obey what he says] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

then I will be an enemy to your enemies and I will be an adversary to your adversaries

These two phrases mean the same thing and are used for emphasis. If saying the same thing twice might be confusing for your readers, you can combine the phrases into one. (See: **Parallelism (p.1417)**)

Exodus 23:23

before your face

This phrase, **before your face**, means “in front of you.” Alternate translation: [in front of you] (See: **Metonymy (p. 1405)**)

Exodus 23:24

and you shall not do as they do

The Israelites must not live as the people who worship other gods. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [and you must not live as the people live who worship those gods]
(See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 23:25

and he will bless your bread and your water

Here, **your bread and your water** is a merism that means food and drink. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [and he will bless your food and drink] or [and he will bless you by giving you food and drink] (See: **Merism (p.1397)**)

and he will bless & And I will remove

Yahweh switched between the first and third pronoun to refer to himself. Here, both **he** and **I** refer to Yahweh. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1351)**)

Exodus 23:26

There will not be a miscarriage or a barren woman

If this double negative would be misunderstood in your language, you could translate it as a positive statement. Alternate translation: [Every woman will be able to become pregnant and give birth to healthy babies] (See: **Double Negatives (p.1335)**)

a miscarriage

to have a pregnancy end early and unexpectedly, resulting in the death of the baby

I will fulfill the number of your days

This is an idiom that means to live a long time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: [I will give you a long life] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Exodus 23:27

before your face

This means “ahead of you.” Alternate translation: [before you] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

and I will give the back of the neck of all of your enemies to you

This is an idiom meaning that the enemies will turn and run away (showing the Israelites the backs of their necks). If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: [and I will make all of your enemies flee] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Exodus 23:28

before your face, & from before your face

This means “ahead of you.” Alternate translation: [before you ... from before you] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

the hornet

The **hornet** is a flying insect that can sting people and cause pain. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

the hornet & and it will drive out

Here, **hornet** is used in the singular but refers to a large group of the flying, stinging insects. **It** agrees in number with **hornet**. It may be necessary to translate as a plural. Alternate translation: [hornets ... and they will drive out] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1304)**)

Exodus 23:29

from before your face

This means “ahead of you.” Alternate translation: [from before you] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

lest the land become desolate

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could make the rest of the idea explicit. Alternate translation: [lest the land become desolate because no one would be living in the land] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 23:30

from before your face

This means “ahead of you.” Alternate translation: [from before you] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 23:31

from before your faces

This means “ahead of you.” Alternate translation: [from before you] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 23:32

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 23:33

Surely it will become a snare for you

This means worshiping other gods will lead the people of Israel to certain destruction, as if they were an animal caught in a hunter's trap. It could also be saying that leaving the other people around will make it so that the Israelites see the other people's worship and are lured (like in a trap) into worshiping the other gods, which is a sin against Yahweh. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Worshiping them will surely destroy you] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 24

Exodus 24 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

- v. 1–2: Yahweh summons Moses
- v. 3–8: Moses reads the covenant and the people accept it; this is ritually marked by sacrifice and sprinkling of blood
- v. 9–11: Moses and Israelite elders go up the mountain, see God and eat
- v. 12–15: Yahweh summons Moses further up the mountain without the other elders, and he goes
- v. 16–18: Description of Yahweh's glory, and Moses is at the top of the mountain

Translation Issues in This Chapter

- there are a number of similes used to describe people's encounter with God
- "covenant" appears in a variety of ways
- the mountain, the mountain of God, and Mount Sinai are all the same location

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Moses' covenant

The people of Israel promise to obey the covenant Yahweh made with Moses. Their continued blessings were contingent upon their obedience to this covenant. (See: [[rc:*///tw/dict/bible/kt/promise]] and [[rc:*///tw/dict/bible/kt/covenant]])

God's holiness

Because Yahweh is perfectly holy, he can only be approached in a certain way. Because of this, only Moses was allowed near Yahweh. This is also why Yahweh is described as a "devouring fire." (See: **holy, holiness, unholy, sacred (p.1478)**)

Exodus 24:1

Nadab and Abihu

A new scene begins here, which may need to be marked in a certain way in your language. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

Nadab and Abihu

Nadab and Abihu are men's names. See how you translated these names in Exodus 6:23. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

to Yahweh

Yahweh refers to himself in the third person. If this is confusing in your language, you may use the first person. Alternate translation: [to me] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1351)**)

and seventy

Alternate translation: [and 70] (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

and you shall bow down

Here, after **bow down,** "to me" is implied. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [and you shall bow down to me] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 1285)**)

Exodus 24:2

and they

Here, **they** refers to all the other people mentioned in 24:1. Alternate translation: [and Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the elders] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

to Yahweh

Yahweh refers to himself in the third person. If this is confusing in your language, you may use the first person. Alternate translation: [to me] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1351)**)

Exodus 24:3

Verses 3–8 tell of a different scene than the rest of the chapter, which may need to be marked in a certain way in your language. It seems that there were some preparations needed before Moses and the elders could go up to meet Yahweh. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

See Exodus 19:8 for how you translated a very similar event.

with one voice

Here, **with one voice** is an idiom that means the people were in complete agreement. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: [together] or [in agreement] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Exodus 24:4

at the bottom of the mountain

Alternate translation: [at the base of the mountain]

and twelve & according to the twelve

Alternate translation: [and 12 ... according to the 12] (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

Exodus 24:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 24:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 24:7

the Book of the Covenant

Here, **book** does not mean something in our modern format. It was likely a piece of papyrus (an early form of paper made from reeds) or animal skin that rolled up. Alternate translation: [the Covenant he had written down] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 24:8

the blood

This refers to **the blood** that Moses had put into the bowls. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

according to all of these words

These words refers to what Moses just read aloud to them, that is, Yahweh's commands. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [which I just read aloud to you and you agreed to] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 24:9

Nadab and Abihu

A new scene begins with this verse, which may need to be marked in a certain way in your language. Here the narrative is connected to 24:2. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

Nadab and Abihu

Nadab and Abihu are men's names. See how you translated these names in Exodus 6:23. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

And & went up

The men **went up** the mountain. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 24:10

And under his feet

And under his feet speaks of God as if he had human feet. If this might be confusing for your readers, you could express this meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And below where God was] (See: **Personification (p.1420)**)

tile & of

a hard surface for walking or riding

sapphire

A **sapphire** is a gemstone that is blue in color. If there is a blue gemstone that your people are familiar with, you may use it here, as the exact gemstone is not certain. You may also describe it. Alternate translation: [a blue gemstone] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

and its substance was as the sky in purity

The point of this comparison is the blueness of the tile. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent comparison or express this meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and it was blue like the sky] (See: **Simile (p.1449)**)

Exodus 24:11

And he did not send out his hand to the leaders of the sons of Israel

Here, **his hand** refers to his judgement. This means that God did not harm the leaders. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [God did not harm the Israelite leaders] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

And he did not send out his hand to the leaders of the sons of Israel

What would be expected is that they would die if they saw God. The Israelite elders ability to see God and live is unexpected. Be sure your translation conveys that. Alternate translation: [However, he did not send out his hand to the leaders of the sons of Israel] (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1313)**)

Exodus 24:12

to teach them

This means so that Moses and the other Israelite leaders could teach the laws and commandments to the Israelite people. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 24:13

and & Joshua

Joshua is introduced here again. Use the natural form in your language for reintroducing a character. (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1385)**)

and his servant Joshua

The word translated **servant** here is usually associated with a higher position, like a government minister. Avoid using a word that implies a lower-class serving role. Alternate translation: [and Joshua his assistant]

Exodus 24:14

And he had said to the elders

The structure of the Hebrew indicates but does not require that this speech by Moses happened before 24:13 (hence **had said**). The ULT takes this view, however, for languages where it is hard to express events out of order, the UST reflects the other grammatical possibility and says in 24:13 that Moses started up the mountain and in 24:15 that he went the rest of the way up the mountain. Following this, you can view this verse as if Moses paused and gave these final instructions as he was leaving the elders behind, thus keeping a sequential structure. Either approach is permissible by the text, but the approach of the ULT is preferred, if possible. (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.1323)**)

us

Alternate translation: [Joshua and me]

and Hur

Hur is a man's name. See how you translated this name in Exodus 17:10. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

And behold

Behold is used to draw attention to important information that Moses is about to tell them. It is frequently omitted. If your language uses a statement to draw attention to important information, you should consider using it here. Alternate translation: [Remember]

Whoever is a master of words

This is an idiom that means that someone has a legal dispute or complaint. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: [Whoever has a legal claim] or [Anyone with a law case] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Exodus 24:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 24:16

the glory of Yahweh

This was the brilliant light of Yahweh's presence. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [the brilliant light showing Yahweh's presence] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

six

Alternate translation: [6] (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

on the seventh day

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use cardinal numbers here. Alternate translation: [on day number 7] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1414)**)

Exodus 24:17

was like a devouring fire

This means the glory of Yahweh was very large and seemed to burn brightly, like a fire. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent comparison or express this meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [like a big fire burning] (See: **Simile (p.1449)**)

in the eyes of the sons of Israel

Their **eyes** represent seeing, and seeing represents their thoughts or judgment about what they saw. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent idiom from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. See how you translated a similar expression in 15:26. Alternate translation: [to the Israelites] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Exodus 24:18

40 days and 40 nights

Alternate translation: [forty days and forty nights] (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

Exodus 25

Exodus 25 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

- v. 1–7: Instructions for gifts the Israelites may give to help build the place where they will worship God
- v. 8–9: Introductory building instructions
- v. 10–22: Instructions for building the Box of the Testimony
- v. 23–30: Instructions for building the table
- v. 31–39: Instructions for building the lampstand
- v. 40: Summary instruction

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

- The tent of meeting and Box of the Testimony are introduced in this chapter.
- Translators will need to take special care in translating the concept of atonement.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

- There are many unfamiliar items in this chapter. Fortunately they are mostly all physical items. Translators will have to try to understand what each item is and translate it into the closest equivalent in their culture. It may be helpful for translators to try to find images depicting some of the items the Israelites were to make.
- There are some biblical weights and measurements that translators may not have encountered before.
- From 25:11 until the end of chapter 30, almost every instruction regarding the construction of the tent of meeting and all the associated items are given with a singular form of “you,” as if Moses himself would make them. However, it is clear and made explicit in chapter 31 that certain skilled craftsmen will receive these instructions from Moses and make these items. In some languages you may need to change from second to third person throughout, following the pattern in 25:10. There are a few exceptions which will have their own note. See: [[rc:*///ta/man/translate/figs-123person]] and [[rc:*///ta/man/translate/figs-youcrowd]].

Exodus 25:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 25:2

Speak

The beginning of this verse marks the start of a very long direct quote which continues until the end of 30:10. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with an opening first-level quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the beginning of a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p. 1436)**)

Speak to the sons of Israel, and they shall take a contribution for me

In some languages you may have to make **and they shall take a contribution for me** a direct quote. Note that this will make it a second-level quotation and you will need to mark it with second-level quotation marking if your language uses them. Alternate translation: [Say to the sons of Israel, 'You shall take a contribution for me.'] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1333)**)

whose heart incites him

This is an idiom that indicates a person's desire to give an offering. Many languages will have a similar idiom, though the body part may vary. Alternate translation: [who wants to give one] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

You shall take

The word **you** is plural and refers to Moses and the leaders. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

Exodus 25:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 25:4

and blue and purple and worm of scarlet

This could mean: (1) “material that is dyed blue, purple, and scarlet,” probably wool yarn, or (2) “blue, purple and scarlet dye” to dye the linen. The original audience would have known what was meant. This material seems to have been used for embroidery later, so “yarn” or “thread” may be the best understanding. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

and worm of scarlet

A bright red color for dying cloth was extracted from these worms. Alternate translation: [and bright red] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 25:5

reddened

When animal skins are tanned (processed into usable leather), they become reddish in color. It is not clear whether these hides are dyed red or simply reddened in the tanning process. Alternate translation: [tanned] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

sea cows

The meaning of this word is not known. It may refer to some water mammal that has skin that can be made into a high-quality leather. Sea cows on Wikipedia (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

acacias

A small tree with spreading foliage and durable wood. See on Wikipedia (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 25:6

spices

Here, **spices** are things made from parts of plants that people dry and then grind into a powder to put in oil or food, giving it a particular smell or flavor. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 25:7

stones of onyx

An **onyx** is a valuable stone that has layers of white and black, red, or brown. If this stone is unknown to your people, consider translating it by using a word for a familiar stone with a similar pattern, if possible. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

and precious stones for

Alternate translation: [and valuable gems for] or [and treasured gems for]

Exodus 25:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 25:9

you

Here, **you** is singular and refers to Moses. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1356)**)

its utensils

Here, **utensils** is a general term that you could translate by a broad term that could encompass all of the things used in the Dwelling, as described in this and the several following chapters. Alternate translation: [its implements]

you shall make it

Here, **you** is plural and refers to Moses and the people of Israel. If your language uses different forms of "you" depending on the number of people addressed, use a plural form here. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural (p. 1354)**)

you shall make it

Since Moses does not construct these items himself, you may consider shifting the instructions to the third person if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [they shall make it] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1351)**)

Exodus 25:10

acacias

These trees, **acacias**, are small trees with spreading foliage and durable wood. See how you translated this in 25:5. See on Wikipedia (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

two cubits and a half; and & one cubit and a half; and & one cubit and a half

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this in terms of modern measurements, either in the text or a footnote. A **cubit** is approximately 46cm. For your reference, a more precise conversion to metric is: 115cm ... 69cm ... 69cm (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1292)**)

and a half; & and a half; & and a half

A **half** means one part out of two equal parts. (See: **Fractions (p.1358)**)

Exodus 25:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 25:12

And you shall cast four rings of gold for it

Casting rings was a process in which gold was melted, poured into a mold that was in the shape of a ring, and then allowed to cool and harden. If this sort of metal-working process is unknown to your people, you may simply describe it, or use a word meaning “make,” as the UST does. The UST approach is preferred, as the creation process is not in focus here, and it would be cumbersome to include the description in the text. You could use a word meaning “make,” and include the description in a footnote if you are including those and your team feels it is important to understand. Alternate translation: [You shall make four rings of gold by melting the gold and pouring it into molds] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 25:13

acacias

A small tree with spreading foliage and durable wood. See how you translated this in 25:5. See on Wikipedia (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 25:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 25:15

The poles shall be in the rings of the ark; they shall not be removed from it

These two phrases mean similar things. Yahweh is saying the same thing in two different ways to emphasize how important this command is. If saying the same thing twice might be confusing for your readers, you can combine the phrases into one. Alternate translation: [The poles belong in the rings of the box; no one is ever to remove them] (See: **Parallelism (p.1417)**)

The poles shall be in the rings of the ark; they shall not be removed from it

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language, as seen in the UST. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 25:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 25:17

two cubits and a half; and & a cubit and a half

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this in terms of modern measurements, either in the text or a footnote. A **cubit** is approximately 46cm. For your reference, a more precise conversion to the metric system is: 115 centimeters ... 69 centimeters ... 69 centimeters (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1292)**)

and a half; & and a half

A **half** means one part out of two equal parts. (See: **Fractions (p.1358)**)

Exodus 25:18

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 25:19

You shall make the cherubim from the atonement lid on its two ends

This seems to indicate that the cherubim should be formed out of the same piece of gold as the rest of the lid. It may, however, mean that at the end they should be one piece, so the gold should be heated to melting and the lid and cherubim joined together. Alternate translation: [You shall join the cherubim to the atonement lid on its two ends]

Exodus 25:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 25:21

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 25:22

with you & with you & you

Here, **you** is singular and refers to Moses. If you have been using a plural you for Yahweh's commands which have been to give to others, make sure you use the singular form of "you" here. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p. 1356)**)

Exodus 25:23

Its length: two cubits, and its width: a cubit, and its height: a cubit and a half

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this in terms of modern measurements, either in the text or a footnote. A **cubit** is approximately 46 centimeters. Alternate translation: [Its length: 92 centimeters, its width: 46 centimeters and its height: 69 centimeters] (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1292)**)

and a half

A **half** means one part out of two equal parts. (See: **Fractions (p.1358)**)

two cubits, and & a cubit, and & a cubit and a half

This verse is almost identical to 25:11.

Exodus 25:24

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 25:25

a handbreadth

You can convert this length to a measurement system familiar to your people if that is the style of translation that you are using. A **handbreadth** is a measurement of approximately eight centimeters. (See: **Biblical Distance (p. 1292)**)

for it

Alternate translation: [for the table]

Exodus 25:26

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 25:27

to house

Here, **to house the poles** means that the rings will hold the poles. Since the rings are where the poles belong for use when carrying the table, the rings are in their **house.** If your language has a similar idiom meaning “place of belonging,” you may use it, or you may translate the idea. Alternate translation: [to be a place for] (See: **Idiom (p. 1378)**)

Exodus 25:28

and the table shall be carried with them

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [And you shall carry the table with them] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 25:29

its plates and its pans and its pitchers and its bowls

We do not know precisely what these dishes were. It is likely that the **plates** were mostly flat dishes for holding the bread that would be on the table. The **pans** may have been shallow bowls or deep plates for holding incense, or they may have been something more like a ladle or spoon. The **pitchers** probably held wine to be poured into the **bowls** for the drink offerings. You will need to translate using the closest word for each such item in your culture. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

with which it will be poured out

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [from which the priests will pour out] (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1280)**)

Exodus 25:30

the bread of faces

Here, **faces** represents the presence of Yahweh. This bread represented the presence of God. Alternate translation: [the bread of the Presence] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

before my face

Here, **face** represents the presence of Yahweh. Alternate translation: [in front of me] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 25:31

of hammered work

Alternate translation: [of beaten gold] See how you translated this in Exodus 25:18.

shall be made

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [you shall make] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 25:32

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 25:33

shaped like almond blossoms

Almond blossoms are white or pink flowers with five petals. (An almond is a kind of nut.) You may want to include a short description as a footnote or in the text (if that is your translation style) the first time this object is encountered. Alternate translation: [shaped like the five-petaled almond flower] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p. 1460)**)

Exodus 25:34

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 25:35

And a bulb will be under two of the branches from it, and a bulb will be under two of the branches from it, and a bulb will be under two of the branches from it—for all six branches extending out from the lampstand

Alternate translation: [There must be a leafy base under the first pair of branches—made as one piece with it, and a leafy base under the second pair of branches—also made as one piece with it. In the same way there must be a leafy base under the third pair of branches, made as one piece with it. It must be the same for all six branches extending out from the lampstand.]

Exodus 25:36

hammered work of

Alternate translation: [of beaten gold] See how you translated this in Exodus 25:18.

Exodus 25:37

and it will make light on the side of its face

Here, **face** represents the location of the lampstand. Alternate translation: [so they shine light near it] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 25:38

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 25:39

from a talent of

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this in terms of modern measurements, either in the text or a footnote. A talent weighs about 33 kilograms. (See: **Biblical Weight (p.1300)**)

Exodus 25:40

See and make

All the items described in this chapter are included in what Moses is told to **see and make**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [See and make everything I have described] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

See and make

Here, **see** relates to observing or overseeing. Essentially, Yahweh is telling Moses to be careful as he observes the pattern on the mountain and as he sees the craftsmen of Israel working on these items, so that they are made correctly. Alternate translation: [Observe carefully and work exactly] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

you are being shown

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [I am showing you] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 26

Exodus 26 General Notes

- The sacred tent has four layers (from inside to out): linen, goats' hair, tanned rams' skins, and fine leather.
- There are multiple different curtains described using three different Hebrew words: one sort of curtains to make the walls of the tent (26:1–13), another to separate the Holy Place and Most Holy Place (also known as Holy of Holies) (26:31–34), and another for the entrance of the sacred tent (26:36–37). If there are words in your language that would make a distinction between these sorts of hanging cloths, it would be appropriate to make a distinction in your translation.

Structure and Formatting

This chapter is a continuation of the material in the previous chapter. - v. 1–30: Instructions for constructing the exterior of the sacred tent * v. 1–6: Inner covering * v. 7–14: Outer covering layers * v. 15–30: Wooden framework - v. 31–35: Instructions for arranging the interior of the sacred tent - v. 36–37: Instructions for hanging the entrance curtain

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

The tent of meeting

This chapter gives specific instructions regarding the building of a tent where Moses would meet Yahweh and the box would be stored. This would eventually become the Dwelling. (See: [[rc:*///tw/dict/bible/kt/tabernacle]] and [[rc:*///tw/dict/bible/kt/holy]])

Exodus 26:1

you shall make

Yahweh is speaking to Moses, so the word **you** is singular. Yahweh probably expected Moses to tell someone else to do the actual work, but Moses would be the one responsible for seeing that the work was done correctly. Alternate translation: [, tell a craftsman to make] (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1356)**)

and blue and purple and worm of scarlet

This could mean: (1) "material that is dyed blue, purple, and scarlet," probably wool yarn, or (2) "blue, purple and scarlet dye" to dye the linen. See how you translated a similar phrase in Exodus 25:4.

and worm of scarlet

A bright red color for dying cloth was extracted from these worms. Alternate translation: [and bright red] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

twisted fine linen

This was cloth made from fine linen threads that someone twisted together to make a stronger thread. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

a skilled craftsman

a person who is skilled in making beautiful objects by hand

Exodus 26:2

28 cubits & 4 cubits

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this in terms of modern measurements, either in the text or a footnote. A **cubit** is approximately 46 centimeters. For your reference, a more precise conversion to metric is: 12.9 meters ... 184 centimeters. (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1292)**)

Exodus 26:3

Five of the curtains shall be joined each to another and five of the curtains joined each to another

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [Join five of the curtains each to another, and join five of the curtains each to another.] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 26:4

blue

Alternate translation: [blue yarn] or [blue cloth]

first & second

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use cardinal numbers here. (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p. 1414)**)

in the set

Alternate translation: [in one set of five curtains]

in the second set

Alternate translation: [in the other set of five curtains]

Exodus 26:5

woman to her sister

This is an idiom meaning “to each other.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: [one to the other] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Exodus 26:6

And you shall make 50 clasps of gold and join the curtains woman to her sister

The clasps fit into the loops (verses 4 and 5) to hold the curtains together.

woman to her sister

This is the same idiom as in the previous verse, meaning together. Alternate translation: [to each other] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

one

Alternate translation: [as though it were one piece]

Exodus 26:7

for a tent

This refers to an outer tent over the sacred tent. Alternate translation: [for an outer tent]

11

Alternate translation: [eleven] (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

Exodus 26:8

30 & 4 & 11

Alternate translation: [thirty ... four ... eleven] (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

30 cubits, & 4 cubits

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this in terms of modern measurements, either in the text or a footnote. A **cubit** is approximately 46cm. For your reference, a more precise conversion to metric is: 13.8 meter ... 184 centimeters (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1292)**)

Exodus 26:9

at the front of the face of the tent

Here, **face** is probably referring to the entrance of the tent. The opening for the protective tent and the sacred tent would have been coordinated so they were in the same place. Alternate translation: [in front of the entrance of the tent] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

the tent

As in 26:7, **the tent** refers to the outer tent over the sacred tent. Alternate translation: [the outer tent]

Exodus 26:10

See how you translated a very similar text in Exodus 26:4.

Exodus 26:11

the clasps

The **clasps** fit into the loops to hold the curtains together. See how you translated this in Exodus 26:6. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 26:12

the half

A **half** means one part out of two equal parts. (See: **Fractions (p.1358)**)

Exodus 26:13

And a cubit & and a cubit

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this in terms of modern measurements, either in the text or a footnote. A **cubit** is approximately 46 centimeters. For your reference, a more precise conversion to metric is: 46 centimeters (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1292)**)

Exodus 26:14

sea-cows

The meaning of this word, **sea cows**, is not known. It may refer to a water mammal that has skin that can be made into a high-quality leather. Sea cows on Wikipedia See how you translated a similar phrase in Exodus 25:5. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

reddened

When animal skins are tanned (processed into usable leather), they become reddish. It is not clear if these hides are dyed red or simply reddened in the tanning process. See how you translated a similar phrase in Exodus 25:5. Alternate translation: [tanned] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 26:15

frames

Here, **frames** refers to open wooden structures made to hold the curtains. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

acacias

The **acacias** are relatively small trees with spreading foliage and durable wood. See how you translated this in 25:5. See on Wikipedia (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 26:16

ten & and & a cubit and a half of a cubit

Alternate translation: [10 ... 1.5 cubits] (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

ten cubits, and & a cubit and a half of a cubit

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this in terms of modern measurements, either in the text or a footnote. A **cubit** is approximately 46 centimeters. For your reference, a more precise conversion to metric is: 4.6 meters ... 69 centimeters. (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1292)**)

and a half of

A **half** means one part out of two equal parts. (See: **Fractions (p.1358)**)

Exodus 26:17

There shall be & tenons

Here, the term **tenons** means a part of the wood sticking out from the rest of the frame so that it can be put into a hole in another object. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

a woman to her sister

This is an idiom meaning “to each other.” See how you translated this in 26:5. Alternate translation: [one to the other] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Exodus 26:18

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 26:19

bases of silver

The **bases of silver** were silver blocks that had a slot in them to keep the board in place and off the ground.

two bases under one frame for its two tenons, and two bases under one frame for its two tenons

The effect of this is to start a list, and the hearer will assume it should be completed. Try to translate this in the way that a speaker of your language would give instructions that are meant to be carried out on a whole group of objects. This same phrasing occurs again in 26:21 and 26:25. Alternate translation: [two bases under the first frame for its two tenons, and then two bases under the next frame for its two tenons, and so on for all the frames] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 26:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 26:21

two bases under one frame and two bases under one frame

The effect of this is to start a list, and the hearer will assume it should be completed. Try to translate this in the way that a speaker of your language would give instructions that are meant to be carried out on a whole group of objects. See how you translated this in Exodus 26:19. Alternate translation: [two bases under the first frame, and then two bases under the next frame, and so on for all the frames] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 26:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 26:23

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 26:24

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 26:25

bases: two & under one frame and two bases under one frame

The effect of this is to start a list, and the hearer will assume it should be completed. Try to translate this in the way that a speaker of your language would give instructions that are meant to be carried out on a whole group of objects. See how you translated this in Exodus 26:19. Alternate translation: [two bases under the first frame, and then two bases under the next frame, and so on for all the frames] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

and their & bases, & bases: & bases & bases

The **bases** were silver blocks that had a slot in them to keep the frame in place. See how you translated this in Exodus 26:19. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 26:26

crossbars of

The **crossbars** are horizontal support beams that give stability to the structure. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p. 1460)**)

Exodus 26:27

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 26:28

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 26:29

the holders for the crossbars

Alternate translation: [which will hold the crossbars] or [because they will hold the crossbars]

for the crossbars

The **crossbars** are horizontal support beams that give stability to the structure. See how you translated this in Exodus 26:26.

Exodus 26:30

you were shown on the mountain

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. See UST. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 26:31

See how you translated very similar text in Exodus 26:1.

Exodus 26:32

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 26:33

the clasps

The **clasps** fit into the loops to hold the curtains together. See how you translated these in Exodus 26:6. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

the Holy of Holies

Here, **Holy of Holies** means extremely or uniquely holy. If this form would not express that this place would become uniquely holy in your language you may need to find another way to express this idea. Alternate translation: [the Most Holy Place] or [the Extraordinarily Holy Place] (See: **Possession (p.1425)**)

Exodus 26:34

in the Holy of Holies

Here, **Holy of Holies** means extremely holy, as in, the holiest of the holy places. If this form would not express that this place would become uniquely holy in your language you may need to find another way to express this idea. See how you translated it in the previous verse. Alternate translation: [in the Most Holy Place] or [in the Extraordinarily Holy Place] (See: **Possession (p.1425)**)

Exodus 26:35

the table & the lampstand

This is the **table** Yahweh told Moses how to make in 25:23–30 and the **lampstand** he told him how to make in 25:31–39.

Exodus 26:36

See how you translated very similar text in Exodus 26:1.

of blue and purple and worm of scarlet

This could mean: (1) “yarn that is dyed blue, purple, and scarlet,” probably wool yarn, or (2) “blue, purple, and scarlet dye” to dye the linen. See how you translated this in Exodus 25:4.

and of twisted fine linen

This was cloth made from fine linen threads that someone twisted together to make a stronger thread. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

an embroiderer

Alternate translation: [a person who sews decorative designs into cloth] or [a person who embroiders] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 26:37

See how you translated very similar instructions in 26:32.

Exodus 27

Exodus 27 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

This chapter is a continuation of the material in the previous chapter. - v. 1–8: Instructions for constructing the altar - v. 9–19: Instructions for constructing the outer curtain walls forming the courtyard around the sacred tent - v. 20–21: Instructions for the lampstand

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

The tent of meeting

This chapter gives specific instructions regarding building the courtyard area around the Dwelling containing the altar where priests made sacrifices to Yahweh.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

- The verb **make** at the beginning of 27:9 is the only verb from verses 9–18. Some languages may be able to translate a clause chain this long without additional verbs. Others (including English), will need to supply at least a minimum number of verbs (ULT) or quite a few verbs (UST) for naturalness.
- There continue to be a number of possibly unknown terms, still all tangible objects.

Exodus 27:1

five cubits & and five cubits & and three cubits

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this in terms of modern measurements, either in the text or a footnote. A cubit is approximately 46 centimeters. For your reference, a more precise conversion to metric is: 2.3 meters ... 2.3 meters ... 138 centimeters (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1292)**)

Exodus 27:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 27:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 27:4

a grate

The **grate** is a frame of crossed metal bars for holding wood when burning.

And you shall make four rings of bronze on the network, on its four corners

You may want to refer back to several other passages regarding making rings for carrying poles when translating this verse. See 25:12, 25:26, and 25:27.

Exodus 27:5

And you shall put it under the ledge of the altar below, and the network shall be up to the middle of the altar

The grate was placed inside the altar. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 27:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 27:7

And its poles shall be put

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [And you shall put its poles] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 27:8

he showed

Here, **he** refers to Yahweh in the third person. If it would be unnatural in your language for someone to refer to himself in this way, you may need to change it. Alternate translation: [I showed] or [Yahweh showed] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1351)**)

they shall do

Here, **they** refers to whoever will make all these items. It is an indication that even though Yahweh has been speaking to Moses in the singular throughout, these instructions are meant to be conveyed to Israelite craftsmen. See Chapter 25 Introduction for more information. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1351)**)

Exodus 27:9

fine twisted linen

This was cloth made from fine linen threads that someone twisted together to make a stronger thread. See how you translated this in Exodus 25:4. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

100 cubits

You can convert this length to a measurement system familiar to your people if that is the style of translation that you are using. A cubit is approximately 46 centimeters. For your reference, a more precise conversion to metric is: 46 meters (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1292)**)

Exodus 27:10

with its 20 pillars and their 20 bronze bases

Here, **bronze** may refer to both the **pillars** and the **bases**, or just to the **bases.** The pillars inside the tent were of wood overlaid with gold; these may be wood overlaid with bronze.

Exodus 27:11

See how you translated many similar words in Exodus 27:9–10.

100

Here, “cubits” is omitted because it is understood as a repetition of the instructions in verse 9. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: [100 cubits] (See: **Ellipsis (p.1340)**)

100

You can convert this length to a measurement system familiar to your people if that is the style of translation that you are using. A cubit is approximately 46 centimeters. For your reference, a more precise conversion to metric is: 46 meters (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1292)**)

Exodus 27:12

50 cubits long

You can convert this length to a measurement system familiar to your people if that is the style of translation that you are using. A cubit is approximately 46 centimeters. For your reference, a more precise conversion to metric is: 23 meters (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1292)**)

Exodus 27:13

50 cubits

You can convert this length to a measurement system familiar to your people if that is the style of translation that you are using. A cubit is approximately 46 centimeters. For your reference, a more precise conversion to metric is: 23 meters (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1292)**)

Exodus 27:14

fifteen

You can convert this length to a measurement system familiar to your people if that is the style of translation that you are using. A cubit is approximately 46 centimeters. For your reference, a more precise conversion to metric is: 6.9 meters (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1292)**)

with} their & pillars

The **pillars** were strong pieces of wood set upright and used as supports. See how you translated these in Exodus 27:10.

and their & bases

The **bases** were metal blocks that had a slot in them to keep the board in place. See how you translated this in Exodus 26:19.

Exodus 27:15

fifteen

You can convert this length to a measurement system familiar to your people if that is the style of translation that you are using. A cubit is approximately 46 centimeters. For your reference, a more precise conversion to metric is: 6.9 meters. (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1292)**)

with their & pillars

These **posts** were strong pieces of wood set upright and used as supports. See how you translated these in Exodus 27:10.

and their & bases

The **bases** were metal blocks that had a slot in them to keep the board in place. See how you translated this in Exodus 26:19.

Exodus 27:16

of blue and purple and worm of scarlet and of twisted fine linen

See how you translated a nearly identical passage in 26:36.

20 cubits wide

You can convert this length to a measurement system familiar to your people if that is the style of translation that you are using. A cubit is approximately 46 centimeters. For your reference, a more precise conversion to metric is: 9.2m (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1292)**)

Exodus 27:17

shall be banded

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [you shall band] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 27:18

shall be 100 cubits, & 50, & five cubits

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this in terms of modern measurements, either in the text or a footnote. A cubit is approximately 46 centimeters. For your reference, a more precise conversion to metric is: 46 meters ... 23 meters ... 2.3 meters. (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1292)**)

50

Here, “cubits” is omitted because it is understood as a repetition of the instructions in verse 9. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: [50 cubits] (See: **Ellipsis (p. 1340)**)

Exodus 27:19

its tent pegs & the pegs of

The **tent pegs** are strong, sharp pieces of metal driven into the ground and used to secure the corners of a tent to the ground or to secure ropes in order to create tension to stabilize something standing upright. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 27:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 27:21

is the testimony

The **testimony** refers to the chest that contains the sacred slabs of stone on which Yahweh had written his commandments. If it would be more clear to your readers you may include a reference to the chest. Alternate translation: [is the Box of the Testimony] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1456)**)

shall arrange it

Here, **it** refers to the lamp mentioned in the previous verse and **arrange** means to set it up for burning, and light it. Alternate translation: [shall set up the lampstand and light it]

before the face of Yahweh

Here, **face** represents the presence of Yahweh. Alternate translation: [in front of me] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

This is an eternal statute throughout the generations of the sons of Israel

See how you translated a similar statement in 12:14

Exodus 28

Exodus 28 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

- v. 1: Introduction - Aaron and sons will become priests
- v. 2–5: General introduction of sacred clothing
- v. 6–14: Instructions for the ephod
    - v. 9–14: Instructions regarding stones on ephod
- v. 15–28: Instructions for the breastpiece
    - v. 17–21: Instructions regarding stones on breastpiece
    - v. 22–28: Instructions for mounting the breastpiece on the ephod
- v. 29–30: Aaron should wear things over his heart
- v 31–35: Instructions for making the robe with bells and pomegranates
- v. 36–38: Instructions regarding the turban
- v. 39–41: Closing general instructions regarding clothing
- v. 42–43: Instructions on making and wearing undergarments
- v. 43b: Closing statement

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Holy garments

Because Yahweh is holy, only the priests could approach him, and when they did they had to be wearing specially made clothing. (See: [[rc:*///tw/dict/bible/kt/priest]] and [[rc:*///tw/dict/bible/kt/holy]])

Translation Issues in This Chapter

- Verses 17–20 list 12 kinds of stone. Scholars are not sure which kinds of stones the Hebrew words refer to. Some translations list different stones. The UST gives the probable color of the gemstones. Translators may use names of familiar gem stones.

Exodus 28:1

And you

Here, **you** refers to Moses; in this case, it is used to highlight that he is the person who must do the next thing. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1356)**)

Aaron your brother

Aaron is older than Moses. If your language uses a different term for the sibling relationship based on gender and age order, choose the appropriate one. (See: **Kinship (p.1391)**)

and Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar

These are men's names. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

Exodus 28:2

clothes of holiness

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **holiness**, you can express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [holy clothes] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

Exodus 28:3

And you

Here, **you** refers to Moses; in this case, it is used to highlight that he is the person who must do the next thing. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1356)**)

to all of the wise of heart, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom

There is a little bit of parallelism here. Yahweh is clarifying who causes someone to be **wise of heart**. You could translate this in a more causative way if that would make more sense. Alternate translation: [to anyone whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, making them wise of heart] (See: **Parallelism (p.1417)**)

to all of the wise of heart, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom

Here, **heart** and **spirit** are both referring to things innately possessed by a person that is, traits of a person. **Wisdom** refers to skill or talent with crafting in this case. Together **wise of heart** and **filled with the spirit of wisdom** both essentially mean "a talented craftsman." If it would be more clear to your readers, you may consider making some of this more explicit. Alternate translation: [to every talented craftsman, those whom I have made skilled in their work] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 28:4

and a tunic of woven work

We do not know what word translated **of woven work** means, as it only occurs here and in 28:39 as a verb. Alternate translation: [and a checkered tunic] or [an embroidered garment]

a turban

This is a head covering made from cloth wrapped around the head several times. You may translate it using a word commonly used for a similar item in your culture. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

and a sash

The **sash** is a piece of cloth that people wear around their waist or across their chest. You may translate it with a word commonly used for a similar item in your culture. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

clothes of holiness

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **holiness**, you can express the same idea in another way. See how you translated this in 28:2. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

Exodus 28:5

and blue and purple and worm of scarlet

This could mean: (1) “material that is dyed blue, purple, and scarlet,” probably wool yarn, or (2) “blue, purple and scarlet dye” to dye the linen. The original audience would have known what was meant. This material seems to have been used for embroidery later, so “yarn” or “thread” may be the best understanding. See how you translated this in 25:4 (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

worm of scarlet

A bright red color for dying cloth was extracted from these worms. Alternate translation: [and bright red] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 28:6

and twisted fine linen

This was cloth made from fine linen threads that someone twisted together to make a stronger thread. See how you translated this in Exodus 26:36. Alternate translation: [fine twined linen] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

a skillful craftsman

The description **skillful craftsman** refers to a person who can make beautiful objects by hand.

Exodus 28:7

It shall have two shoulder pieces joining to its two ends; so it shall be joined

This likely meant creating some sort of fastening up by the shoulders to attach the front of the ephod to its back. Alternate translation: [They shall make it so that the front and back attach to each other at the shoulders]

so it shall be joined

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [join it together that way] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 28:8

which is on it & of like workmanship, from it

This is saying that the sash should be attached to the ephod, perhaps cut from the same material used to make the rest of the ephod.

Exodus 28:9

stones of onyx

These **stones of onyx** are valuable stones that have layers of white and black, red, or brown. See how you translated this in Exodus 25:7. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

two

Alternate translation: [2] (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

Exodus 28:10

six of & the six

Alternate translation: [6 of ... the 6] (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

according to their genealogies

Alternate translation: [according to their birth order]

Exodus 28:11

the engravings of a signet

Alternate translation: [in the same way a person engraves on a seal]

a craftsman of stone

A **craftsman of stone** is a person who cuts designs into stones. Alternate translation: [a detailed stone cutter] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

a signet

This is an engraved stone often set into a ring and used to stamp a design into a wax seal to authenticate an official document. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

ornamental settings of

These are pieces of metal that hold the stones onto the ephod. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 28:12

reminder & for a reminder

The text does not specify if Yahweh or Aaron or someone else is the one being reminded by the stones. It also does not specify exactly what the reminder is of. Try to maintain this ambiguity if possible in your translation.

before the face of

Here, **face** represents the presence of Yahweh. Alternate translation: [in the presence of] (See: **Metonymy (p. 1405)**)

Exodus 28:13

ornamental settings of

The **ornamental settings** are pieces of precious metal that surround the sides of hold each stone to hold it onto the ephod. See how you translated this in Exodus 28:11. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 28:14

and two twisted chains of pure gold: you shall make them as a work of rope

Alternate translation: [and you shall make two chains of pure gold that are braided like cords]

Exodus 28:15

the work of a skillful craftsman—you shall make it like the work of the ephod

Alternate translation: [a skillful workman will make it like the ephod]

Exodus 28:16

a span; and & a span

You can convert this length to a measurement system familiar to your people if that is the style of translation that you are using. A span is approximately 23 centimeters. (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1292)**)

It shall be square, folded double

Alternate translation: [Fold it in half so it will be square]

Exodus 28:17

a ruby, a topaz, and a garnet

These are precious stones. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Twelve kinds of stones are listed in the next four verses. Scholars are not sure which kinds of stones the Hebrew words refer to. Some translations list different stones. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 28:18

And the second row

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use cardinal numbers here. Alternate translation: [And row 2:] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1414)**)

an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond

These are precious stones. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

a sapphire

This is a gemstone that is blue in color. See how you translated this in Exodus 24:10. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p. 1460)**)

Exodus 28:19

And the third row

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use cardinal numbers here. Alternate translation: [And row 3:] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1414)**)

a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst

These are precious stones (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 28:20

And the fourth row

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use cardinal numbers here. Alternate translation: [And row 4:] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1414)**)

a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper

These are precious stones. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

and an onyx

An **onyx** is a valuable stone that has layers of white and black, red, or brown. See how you translated these in Exodus 25:7. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

They shall be set in gold

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [You shall set them in gold] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 28:21

like the engraving of a signet

This is an engraved stone often set into a ring and used to stamp a design into a wax seal to authenticate an official document. Here the stone is mounted on a ring. See how you translated “signet” in Exodus 28:11. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 28:22

twisted chains & as a work of rope—pure gold

See how you translated similar phrases in Exodus 28:14. Alternate translation (should replace **twisted chains**): [chains that are made of pure gold and are braided like cords] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 28:23

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 28:24

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 28:25

at the front of its face

Here, **face** simply refers to the object (the ephod). Alternate translation: [on its front side] (See: **Metonymy (p. 1405)**)

to the two ornamental settings

These are two settings that enclose the stones. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 28:26

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 28:27

its face

Here, **face** simply refers to the object (the ephod). Alternate translation: [on its front side] (See: **Metonymy (p. 1405)**)

skillfully crafted waistband of

The **waistband** was a cloth belt made from narrow linen threads that someone twisted together to make a stronger thread. See how you translated this in Exodus 28:8. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 28:28

so the breastpiece shall not become detached from on

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [so that the breastpiece shall stay attached to] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

so the breastpiece shall not become detached from on

If this double negative would be misunderstood in your language, you could translate it as a positive statement. Alternate translation: [so that the breastpiece shall stay attached to] (See: **Double Negatives (p.1335)**)

Exodus 28:29

the names of the sons of Israel

This refers to the names of the tribes engraved on the twelve stones the breastplate as described in Exodus 28:17–21.

over his heart

Alternate translation: [over Aaron's heart] or [on his chest]

Exodus 28:30

the Urim and the Thummim

It is not clear what **the Urim and the Thummim** are. They were objects, possibly stones, that the priest used to somehow determine the will of God. Because of this, it is basically impossible to translate. In your translation, you can spell it the way it sounds in your language. (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.1331)**)

And Aaron shall bear the judgment of the sons of Israel over his heart before the face of Yahweh continually

This phrase appears to refer to the Urim and Thummim and explain their purpose. Alternate translation: [And Aaron shall bear the decisions for the sons of Israel over his heart before Yahweh continually] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

before the face of Yahweh. & before the face of Yahweh

Here, **face** represents the presence of Yahweh. Alternate translation: [before Yahweh ... before Yahweh] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 28:31

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 28:32

the work of a weaver

Alternate translation: [made by a weaver]

a weaver

Alternate translation: [a person who weaves] or [a person who creates cloth using thread, yarns and wool] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

a garment

We do not know what this term means, but the implication seems to be that the collar should be made strong. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

so it can not tear

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language, as modeled in the UST. (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 28:33

blue, purple, and worm of scarlet

This could mean: (1) “material that is dyed blue, purple, and scarlet,” probably wool yarn, or (2) “blue, purple and scarlet dye” to dye the linen. The original audience would have known what was meant. This material seems to have been used for embroidery later, so “yarn” or “thread” may be the best understanding. See how you translated this in 25:4 (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 28:34

a bell of gold and a pomegranate, a bell of gold and a pomegranate

This phrase is repeated to show the pattern of the design on the robe. Alternate translation: [alternate pomegranates and golden bells]

Exodus 28:35

and its sound shall be heard

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [so that the bells make a sound] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

before the face of Yahweh

Here, **face** represents the presence of Yahweh. Alternate translation: [before Yahweh] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Yahweh

Here, Yahweh refers to himself in the third person. If this is confusing in your language, you may use the first person. Alternate translation: [me] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1351)**)

And he shall not die

The probable implication is that he would die because he did not obey Yahweh. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [As a result, he will not die because of disobeying my instructions] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 28:36

a rosette of

We do not know exactly what this was. It was probably a thin piece of gold smaller than the palm of someone's hand. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

and engrave on it, like the engraving on a signet

See how you translated similar words in Exodus 28:11 Alternate translation: [write on it in the same way a person engraves on a seal.] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 28:37

the turban. & the turban

This was a head covering made from cloth wrapped around the head several times. See how you translated this in Exodus 28:4. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

toward the front of the face of the turban

Here, **face** means the front. Alternate translation: [to the front of the turban] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 28:38

and Aaron shall bear the iniquity of the holy things

Here, **iniquity** is pictured as something that can be carried or worn like the turban. It also seems to picture handing off the iniquity from the people to Aaron. Also here, **iniquity** actually seems to refer to the punishment for anything that might be wrong regarding the things the Israelites offer Yahweh. You may need to use a different word than **bear** to convey the transfer of responsibility for wrongs from the people to Aaron. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and Aaron shall be responsible for any wrong related to the holy things] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

before the face of Yahweh

Here, **face** represents the presence of Yahweh. Alternate translation: [before Yahweh] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Yahweh

Here, Yahweh refers to himself in the third person. If this is confusing in your language, you may use the first person. Alternate translation: [me] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1351)**)

Exodus 28:39

a turban

This was a head covering made from cloth wrapped around the head several times. See how you translated this in Exodus 28:4. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

And & a sash

A **sash** is a decorative piece of cloth that a person wears around his waist or across his chest. See how you translated this in Exodus 28:4. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

an embroiderer

An embroiderer is a person who sews decorative designs onto cloth. See how you translated this in Exodus 26:36. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 28:40

sashes

The **sashes** are decorative pieces of cloth that people wear around the waist or across the chest. See how you translated this in Exodus 28:4. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

headbands

A headband is a decorative, narrow strip of cloth that is worn around the head above the eyes. This seems to be similar to, but perhaps smaller than the turban worn by the high priest. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 28:41

your brother Aaron

Aaron is older than Moses. If your language uses a different term for the sibling relationship based on gender and age order, choose the appropriate one. (See: **Kinship (p.1391)**)

and you shall fill their hand

This seems to be an idiom for giving authority to someone. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: [and you shall ordain them] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Exodus 28:42

undergarments of

These are articles of clothing worn under the outer clothes, next to the skin. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

the flesh of nakedness

This refers to the male genitalia. This is a polite way of referring to something unpleasant. If this would be misunderstood in your language, use a different polite way of referring to this or you could state this plainly. Alternate translation: [their private parts] (See: **Euphemism (p.1345)**)

Exodus 28:43

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 29

Exodus 29 Chapter Introduction

Large translation teams working on multiple books at the same time should note that this chapter is very similar to Leviticus 8.

Structure and Formatting

As you translate, you may perceive a different structure in this chapter than what is below. Feel free to organize in a way that is clear in your language. This chapter is really one united whole; the outline below is one possible way of subdividing it. The Consecration of the Priests - v. 1–3 Preparing items - v. 4–9 Preparing Aaron and his sons - v. 10–14 Sacrificing the bull to purify the altar - v. 15–34 Sacrificing the rams * v. 15–18 The first ram wholly burned * v. 19–28 The second ram used for consecrating and divided for eating * v. 29–30 Priestly succession * v. 31–34 More instructions regarding eating the second ram - v. 35–37 Instructions to do all this for seven days - v. 38–41 Instructions for perpetual offerings - v. 42–46 Yahweh's affirmation

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Consecrating priests

This chapter records the process of consecrating priests. The priests were to be set apart from the rest of Israel because Yahweh is holy. (See: [[rc:///*tw/dict/bible/kt/consecrate]] and *[[rc:///*tw/dict/bible/kt/priest]] and **holy, holiness, unholy, sacred (p.1478)**)

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Forms of you

For this chapter, it seems that the singular "you" that Yahweh has been using to give Moses general instructions for the last several chapters now actually refers to Moses himself. If you have been translating the instructions using a plural form of you or by shifting the instructions to the third person, you should switch back to a singular form referring directly to Moses for this chapter.

"I will live among the Israelites"

As God, Yahweh is everywhere and cannot be limited to a single space. This phrase indicates that he permanently remains within Israel in a special way while they have the ark.

Exodus 29:1

And this

A new scene begins here. There is a change in topic from instructions for making garments for priests to consecrating priests. This may need to be marked in a certain way in your language. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

you shall do

Here, **you** refers to Moses. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

to them

Here, **they** refers to Aaron and his sons. Alternate translation: [to Aaron and his sons] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

to me

Here, **me** refers to Yahweh. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

a son of the herd

This is an idiom meaning young. If you do not have a similar idiom you may translate the meaning. Alternate translation: [a young one] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Exodus 29:2

mixed with oil & rubbed with oil

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. You may need to shorten the sentences and make the alternate translation content separate sentences or mark it off with special punctuation. Alternate translation: [(mix them with oil) ... (rub them with oil)] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

and unleavened wafers rubbed with oil

These may have been rubbed with oil before or after baking.

and & cakes & and & wafers

These are different kinds of food made from flour. While all the breads were somewhat flat because they were unleavened, the **cakes** were a bread enriched with oil, and the **wafers** were especially thin. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 29:3

them

Alternate translation: [the bread, cakes, and wafers] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

and you shall bring them near in the basket, and the bull and the two rams

Here, **in the basket** is almost parenthetical. You may need to restructure the sentence or use punctuation to make it clear that **the bull and the two rams** are connected to **bring**, and not to **in the basket.** Alternate translation: [and you shall bring them near (in the basket) along with the bull and the two rams]

Exodus 29:4

the tent of meeting

The **tent of meeting** is another name for the Dwelling. See how you translated this in Exodus 27:21.

Exodus 29:5

with the finely woven waistband of

This was a cloth belt made from narrow linen threads that someone twisted together to make a stronger thread. See how you translated this in Exodus 28:8. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 29:6

the turban & the turban

This was a head covering made from cloth wrapped around the head several times. See how you translated this in Exodus 28:4. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

the crown of holiness

This **crown** is described in Exodus 28:36 as being engraved with the words “Holy to Yahweh” and made of pure gold. There it is referred to by a different Hebrew word, which is translated as “rosette.” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

the crown of holiness

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **holiness**, you can express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [the holy crown] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

Exodus 29:7

the oil of anointing

See how you translated **oil of anointing** in 25:6. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 29:8

his sons

Alternate translation: [Aaron’s sons] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

Exodus 29:9

with the sash

A **sash** is a decorative piece of cloth that people wear around their waist or across their chest. See how you translated this word in Exodus 28:4. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

headbands

A headband is a narrow, decorative strip of cloth that is worn around the head above the eyes. See how you translated this in Exodus 28:40. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

the priesthood

Here, **the priesthood** means the official office of priest. Alternate translation: [the duty of being priests] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

And the priesthood will be to them

The duty of being priests will also belong to the descendants of Aaron's sons. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [And the priesthood will belong to them and their descendants] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

as a statute forever

Alternate translation: [a law that will not end.] See how you translated this in Exodus 28:43.

And you shall fill the hand of Aaron and the hand of his sons

The phrase, **fill the hand**, seems to be an idiom for giving authority to someone. See how you translated this in Exodus 28:41. Alternate translation: [And you shall ordain Aaron and his sons] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

And you shall fill the hand of Aaron and the hand of his sons

The phrase, **fill the hand** may be (1) a summary and reminder statement of the whole ordination process, (2) referring to the previous description, meaning that the priests have been ordained, or (3) referring to the following description, meaning that the priests are about to be ordained. It would probably be best to translate this in the way a mid-text summary reminder phrase would be spoken in your language, avoiding any indication that it refers only to the previous or following text.

Exodus 29:10

The purpose of the sacrifice explained here through verse 14 is to purify or cleanse the altar. This is made more clear in 29:36–37.

to the face of the tent of meeting

Here, **face** refers to the front of the tent. See the UST. (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands on the head of the bull

The slaughter of the bull in the next verse occurs while the priests continue to have their hands on the bull's head. Take care to arrange the phrases and to use words or forms that indicate that the two events happened at the same time. (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.1325)**)

Exodus 29:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 29:12

the horns of

These were projections that looked like ox horns attached to the four corners of the altar. See how you translated this in Exodus 27:2. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

all of the blood

Alternate translation: [the remaining blood]

Exodus 29:13

and cause them to become smoke

Alternate translation: [and burn them to make smoke]

the liver & the & kidneys

The **liver** and **kidneys** are organs in the body. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 29:14

But you shall burn the flesh of the bull and its skin and its dung

Alternate translation: [But as for the remaining parts of the bull, including the flesh and dung, you shall burn it]

outside of the camp

Alternate translation: [outside the borders of where the Israelites are camped]

Exodus 29:15

and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands on the head of the ram

The slaughter of the ram in the next verse occurs while they continue to have their hands on the ram's head. Take care to arrange the phrases and to use words or forms that indicate that the two events happened at the same time. (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.1325)**)

Exodus 29:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 29:17

its entrails

Alternate translation: [the organs] See how you translated this in Exodus 29:13. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p. 1460)**)

Exodus 29:18

and cause all of the ram to become smoke

Alternate translation: [and burn all of the ram to make smoke]

It is a burnt offering to Yahweh. It is a scent of appeasement, a fire offering to Yahweh

These phrases are in parallel, with the second expanding and clarifying the first. In some languages, you may need to use a different structure to expand and clarify the **burnt offering**. Alternate translation: [It is a pleasant smelling burnt offering made by fire to Yahweh] (See: **Parallelism (p.1417)**)

Exodus 29:19

the second

Except for **the second,** this verse is identical to 29:15.

Exodus 29:20

and you shall slaughter the ram

They killed the ram by cutting its throat. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [and kill the ram by cutting its throat] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 29:21

And you shall take some of the blood that is on the altar and some of the oil of anointing and sprinkle it

Moses would mix the blood and oil. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [And you shall take some of the blood that is on the altar and mix it with some of the oil of anointing and sprinkle it] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 29:22

the entrails & the liver & the & kidneys

The **entrails, liver**, and **kidneys** refer to organs inside the body. See how you translated this in Exodus 29:13. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 29:23

and one round loaf of bread, and one cake of bread of oil, and one wafer from the basket of unleavened bread that is before the face of Yahweh

All of these items were in the basket mentioned in 29:2, not just the wafer. Be sure this is clear in your translation. Alternate translation: [and from the basket of bread without yeast that is before the face of Yahweh: one round loaf of bread, and one cake of bread of oil, and one wafer]

and one round loaf of bread, and one cake of bread of oil, and one wafer from the basket of unleavened bread

For 29:23, see how you translated similar words in Exodus 29:2.

that is before the face of Yahweh

This means in the presence of Yahweh. Alternate translation: [that you have placed before Yahweh] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 29:24

all these

Here, **all these** refers to the parts of the sacrifice mentioned in the previous verses. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

and you shall raise

While the text reads, **you shall raise**, logically, it is Aaron and his sons who will raise the offerings at this point. If this is confusing in your language, you may use the third person. Alternate translation: [and they shall raise] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1351)**)

and you shall raise them as a raised offering before the face of Yahweh

The act of raising the meat and bread symbolized dedicating it to Yahweh. The priests would be acting out the process of handing the offering to him. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [and they shall show that they are giving them to me by holding them up to me] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1454)**)

before the face of Yahweh

This means in the presence of Yahweh. Alternate translation: [before Yahweh] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 29:25

and cause them to become smoke on the altar above the burnt offering to be an aroma of appeasing before the face of Yahweh, it is a fire offering to Yahweh

See how you translated similar phrases in 29:18.

Exodus 29:26

from the ram of consecration

See how you translated this in 29:22. Alternate translation: [from the ram that you dedicated]

and raise it for a raised offering

The act of raising the meat symbolized dedicating it to Yahweh. The priests would be acting out handing the offering to him. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. See how you translated this in 29:24. Alternate translation: [and show that you are giving it to me by holding it up to me] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1454)**)

Exodus 29:27

and & the raised offering that was raised & the thigh of the contribution that was contributed

The act of raising the meat symbolized dedicating it to Yahweh. The priests would be acting out handing the offering to him. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. See how you translated this in 29:24. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1454)**)

Exodus 29:28

And it shall belong to Aaron and to his sons—as an eternal requirement—for it is an offering from the sons of Israel

Alternate translation: [This offering is what Aaron and his sons will always receive from the people]

for it is an offering from the sons of Israel. And it shall be an offering from the sons of Israel from the sacrifices of their peace offerings, their offerings to Yahweh

The amount of repetition in this verse may make it difficult to translate smoothly. You may consider combining some phrases if that would work better in your language. Alternate translation: [for the Israelites must offer this portion from what they bring to Yahweh as peace offerings to him]

Exodus 29:29

And the garments of holiness

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **holiness**, you can express the same idea in another way. See how you translated this in 28:2. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

and to fill their hand in them

Fill their hand seems to be an idiom for giving authority to someone. See how you translated this in Exodus 28:41. Alternate translation: [to ordain them in the clothing] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Exodus 29:30

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 29:31

the ram of consecration

The **ram of consecration** refers to the second ram, the one described in 20:19 and following.

in a holy place

This is not the same as the Holy Place outside of the Most Holy Place. This probably refers to a place within the courtyard. However, its exact location is not otherwise specified. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [at the entrance to the tent of meeting] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 29:32

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 29:33

to fill their hand

This seems to be an idiom for giving authority to someone. See how you translated this in Exodus 28:41. Alternate translation: [to ordain them] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Exodus 29:34

It shall not be eaten

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [No one may eat it] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 29:35

thus

Here, **thus** means “like this” and, as the next verses make clear, refers to the sacrificial ceremony outlined in this chapter which they must repeat seven times.

seven

Alternate translation: [7] (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

you shall fill their hand

This seems to be an idiom for giving authority to someone. See how you translated this in Exodus 28:41. Alternate translation: [you shall ordain them] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Exodus 29:36

And you shall offer a bull of purification for atonement daily, and you shall purify the altar by making atonement for it

The phrase **and you shall purify the altar by making atonement for it** describes the purpose of offering the bull. You may want to use a stronger connector. In languages that need to put purpose first, you may need to re-order the clauses. Alternate translation: [And you shall offer a bull of purification for atonement daily, thus you shall purify the altar, by making atonement for it.] or [You shall purify the altar by making atonement for it: you shall offer a bull of purification daily for its atonement.] (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.1315)**)

This verse and the next explain the purpose of the sacrifice detailed in 29:10–14.

Exodus 29:37

a holiest holy thing

Here, **holiest holy** means extremely or uniquely holy. If this form would not express that this item would become uniquely holy in your language you may need to find another way to express this idea. Alternate translation: [a most holy thing] or [extraordinarily holy] (See: **Possession (p.1425)**)

will be set apart

Alternate translation: [will also become set apart]

Exodus 29:38

sons of a year

The phrase **sons of a year** is an idiom meaning one year old. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Exodus 29:39

between the evenings

The exact meaning of this phrase is debated. Since the priests ate many of the sacrifices, it may have been offered around the time of the evening meal. (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Exodus 29:40

a tenth of & the fourth part of & the fourth part of

A **tenth** means one part out of ten equal parts. A **fourth** means one part out of four equal parts. (See: **Fractions (p. 1358)**)

a tenth of fine flour

Many commentators suggest that this means one tenth of an “ephah” even though “ephah” is not written. If your translation style retains the original measurement words, you may need to insert the word you are using for “ephah” here. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

a tenth of fine flour & the fourth part of a hin) & the fourth part of a hin of

The values given in the UST are approximations as the exact size of an ephah and a hin is not precisely known. An ephah (the implied measurement) may have been around 22 liters, so this is about 2.2 liters of flour. A hin may have been around 3.7 liters, so this is about one liter of both oil and wine. (See: **Biblical Volume (p.1297)**)

Exodus 29:41

between the evenings

The exact meaning of the phrase **between the evenings** is debated. Since the priests ate many of the sacrifices, it may have been offered around the time of the evening meal. See how you translated it in 29:39. (See: **Idiom (p. 1378)**)

Exodus 29:42

throughout your generations

Alternate translation: [through all the generations of your descendants.] See how you translated this in Exodus 12:14.

before the face of Yahweh

This means in the presence of Yahweh. Alternate translation: [before Yahweh] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 29:43

and it will be set apart by my glory

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [My awesome presence will dedicate the tent to me] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 29:44

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 29:45

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 29:46

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 30

Exodus 30 General Notes

This chapter is mostly a return to instructions for building worship equipment for the sacred tent. The forms of "you" are mostly singular. However, they again refer to the workmen that Moses will instruct, so you should return to whatever form you have been following in chapters 25–28.

Structure and Formatting

- v. 1–10: Incense altar
    - v. 1–6: Instructions for making the incense altar
    - v. 7–10: Use of the incense altar
- v. 11–16: Ransom money for taking a census
- v. 17–21: Instructions for a washbasin
- v. 22–30: Anointing oil
    - v. 22–25: Instructions for making the oil
    - v. 26–33: Instructions for using the oil v- 34–38: Making and using sacred incense

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Atonement

Through the offering of blood and money, things and people were kept in God's favor. (See: **atonement, atone, atoned (p.1470)**)

Holiness

Some items in this chapter became so holy that they could make other things holy. (See: **holy, holiness, unholy, sacred (p.1478)**)

Unknown terms

There are a number of ingredient terms that are unknown even to scholars.

Exodus 30:1

And you shall make

Here, **you** refers to Moses and the people of Israel. If your language makes a distinction, use a plural form here.
(See: **Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

Exodus 30:2

Its horns

See how you translated **horns** in Exodus 27:2 (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

shall be one cubit and & shall be one cubit. & and & shall be two cubits

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this in terms of modern measurements, either in the text or a footnote. A **cubit** is approximately 46cm. For your reference, a more precise conversion to metric is: 46cm ... 46cm ... 92cm (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1292)**)

Exodus 30:3

This verse is very similar to Exodus 25:11, so see how you translated there.

Exodus 30:4

When translating this verse, you may want to refer back to several other passages regarding making rings for carrying poles. See 25:12, 25:26, 25:27, and 27:4.

housings

Here, the word **housings** means that the rings will hold the poles. Since they are where the poles belong for use, they are their house. If you have a similar idiom meaning “place of belonging,” you may use it or you may translate the idea. Alternate translation: [a place] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Exodus 30:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 30:6

before the face of & It shall be before the face of

Here, **before the face of** means in front of. (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

you

Here, **you** refers to Moses. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1356)**)

Exodus 30:7

Morning by morning

Alternate translation: [Each morning] or [Daily, in the morning]

when he makes the lamps good

wAlternate translation: [trims the lamps]

Exodus 30:8

and when Aaron lifts up the lamps

This may indicate that in the morning Aaron had taken the lamps down, and he would light them and then put them up on the holders in the evening.

between the evenings

The exact meaning of this phrase is debated. See how you translated it in 29:39. (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

throughout your generations

Alternate translation: [through all the generations of your descendants.] See how you translated this in Exodus 12:14.

Exodus 30:9

You shall not offer up strange incense or a burnt offering or a grain offering on it

Later, in 30:34 and following, God describes how to make the one sort of incense that he wants burnt on this altar. Alternate translation: [You shall only offer up the kind of incense I tell you. You shall not make burnt or grain offerings on it.]

Exodus 30:10

It is a holiest holy thing to Yahweh

This last clause defines the purpose of the ritual described in this verse. See 29:37. Use a natural way in your language for indicating purpose. Alternate translation: [This is to make it holy of holies to Yahweh.] (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.1315)**)

its horns

These were projections that looked like ox horns and were attached to the four corners of the altar. See how you translated this in Exodus 27:2.

throughout your generations

Alternate translation: [through all the generations of your descendants.] See how you translated this in Exodus 12:14.

a holiest holy thing

Here, **holiest holy** means extremely or uniquely holy. If this form would not express that this item would become uniquely holy in your language you may need to find another way to express this idea. See how you translated this in Exodus 29:37. Alternate translation: [a most holy thing] or [extraordinarily holy] (See: **Possession (p.1425)**)

to Yahweh

After **Yahweh**, the direct quote that began in 25:2 ends. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with a closing first-level quotation mark or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the end of a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1436)**)

Exodus 30:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 30:12

you lift up the head of

In this context, **lift up the head** means to take a census. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: [take a census] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

you lift up

This could mean: (1) **you** refers to Moses and the leaders of Israel in future generations when they take a census or (2) **you** refers to just Moses. (See: **Forms of You (p.1353)**)

each man

The leaders only counted the Israelite men.

Exodus 30:13

Every passer over to the counted ones

This is an idiom that suggests that the men were counted by walking past someone who was counting people as they walked by. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: [Everyone counted] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

a shekel, according to the shekel of & the shekel & gerahs). & shekel

The **shekel** and the **gerah** are units of weight. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this in terms of modern measurements, either in the text or a footnote. (See: **Biblical Weight (p.1300)**)

a shekel, according to the shekel of & the shekel & shekel

The **shekel** was used as both a weight and a unit of money. (See: **Biblical Money (p.1295)**)

half of & The half

A **half** means one part out of two equal parts. (See: **Fractions (p.1358)**)

according to the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel is 20 gerahs

There were evidently shekels of more than one weight at the time. This specified which one was to be used.

Exodus 30:14

Every passer over to the counted ones

This is an idiom that suggests that the men were counted by walking past someone who was counting people as they walked by. It is the same phrase as in the previous verse. Alternate translation: [Everyone counted] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

from a son of 20 years

This is an idiom that refers to age. See the UST and how you translated the same idiom in 7:7. (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

from a son of 20 years and up

Larger numbers are spoken of as being up or above smaller numbers. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [from twenty years old and more] or [who is twenty years old or older] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 30:15

from the half-shekel

See how you translated this in Exodus 3:13. (See: **Biblical Money (p.1295)**)

your lives

The plural form of you is used here. In many cases, since Yahweh is speaking to Moses about the people that will be counted, it may make more sense to change to the third person. However, Moses would be counted as well and would have to pay the ransom, so a form of you that could include Moses and all the other Israelite men would also be an appropriate translation. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1351)**)

Exodus 30:16

And it shall be as a reminder for the sons of Israel before the face of Yahweh to cover over your lives

This sentence is very unclear. It is not clear who is being reminded of what. This could mean: (1) that it will remind Yahweh that the Israelites have given money for their lives, and therefore he should welcome them. (2) that it will remind the Israelites that they have given Yahweh money for their lives. Therefore, Yahweh will welcome them.

before the face of Yahweh

Here, **face** represents the presence of Yahweh. Alternate translation: [before Yahweh] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 30:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 30:18

a basin of bronze

Alternate translation: [a bronze bowl] or [a bronze tub] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

and its base of

The **base** is what the basin would be put upon.

for washing

This phrase, **for washing**, explains the purpose for which the priests were to use the bronze basin.

Exodus 30:19

in it

Alternate translation: [in the water in the basin]

Exodus 30:20

and they will not die

The priests might die if they do not wash because God would kill them for being defiled in his presence. If your readers would not understand this you may want to include it in a footnote or in the text. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

and they will not die

Not dying is the goal of the priests' washing. If the goal of some action needs to be placed elsewhere in the structure of your language move it to the usual location. (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.1315)**)

Exodus 30:21

And this shall be a statute forever for them, for him and his offspring throughout their generations

See how you translated a similar phrase in Exodus 12:17.

Exodus 30:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 30:23

spices

These are parts of dried plants (other than the leaves) which people grind into a powder and put in oil or food to give it a nice smell or flavor. See how you translated this in Exodus 25:6. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

500, & 250, & 250

The next verse mentions that these are shekel weight measurements. You may want to include some indication of that here. Alternate translation: [500 shekels ... 250 shekels ... 250 shekels] (See: **Ellipsis (p.1340)**)

and cinnamon of

The word **cinnamon** is a kind of weet spice taken from the inside of the bark of a tree that grows in south-east Asia. If your readers would not be familiar with what cinnamon is, you could use a more general term or explain it in a footnote. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

and cane of

This plant is unknown to scholars. Alternate translation: [and reed of] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 30:24

and cassia

The **cassia** is a kind of a sweet spice taken from the bark of a tree that grows in east Asia. It is slightly different than the spice cinnamon in the previous verse. If your readers would not be familiar with what cassia is, you could use a more general term or explain it in a footnote. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

according to the shekel of the sanctuary

There were evidently shekels of more than one weight at the time. This specified which one was to be used. See how you translated this in Exodus 30:13. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this in terms of modern measurements, either in the text or a footnote. (See: **Biblical Weight (p.1300)**)

a hin

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express the quantity in modern measurements. Alternatively, to help your readers recognize that the biblical writings come from long ago when people used different measurements, you could express the amount using the ancient measurement, the **hin**, and explain the equivalent in modern measurements in a footnote. (See: **Biblical Volume (p.1297)**)

Exodus 30:25

the work of an ointment mixer

This could mean: (1) Moses was to have an ointment mixer do the work. (2) Moses was to do the work himself the way an ointment mixer would do it.

an ointment mixer

This is a person who is skilled in mixing spices and oils. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

an oil of anointment of holiness

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **holiness**, you can express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [a holy oil of anointment] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

Exodus 30:26

And you shall anoint

Here, **you** may refer to Moses. (See: **Forms of You (p.1353)**)

Exodus 30:27

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 30:28

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 30:29

them

Here, **them** refers to the items listed in Exodus 30:26–28.

holiest holy things

Here, **holiest holy** means extremely or uniquely holy. If this form would not express that this item would become uniquely holy in your language you may need to find another way to express this idea. See how you translated this in Exodus 29:37. Alternate translation: [a most holy thing] or [extraordinarily holy] (See: **Possession (p.1425)**)

Exodus 30:30

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 30:31

throughout your generations

Alternate translation: [all the generations of your descendants.] See how you translated this in Exodus 12:14.

oil of anointment of holiness

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **holiness**, you can express the same idea in another way. See how you translated this in 30:25. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

Exodus 30:32

It shall not be poured on the body of a man

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [You shall not pour it on the body of a man] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

and & with its formula

Alternate translation: [and ... with the same ingredients] or [and ... with the same items] or [and ... according to this recipe]

It is holy; it shall be holy to you

The second half of this statement (**it shall be holy to you**) explains to the people the result of this oil being holy, which is, they must respect it as a holy thing. It may make more sense in some languages to move this whole statement to the beginning of the verse, because the rule about pouring on someone's body is an application of the result. Alternate translation (placed at the beginning of the verse): [Because it is sacred, you must treat it like it is sacred, therefore] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1320)**)

Exodus 30:33

shall be cut off from his people

See how you translated **cut off** in Exodus 12:15. (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

shall be cut off from his people

See how you translated **cut off** in 12:15. (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 30:34

stacte, and onycha, and galbanum

Here is a brief description of these materials, though we really do not know exactly what they are: **stacte** is a resin from certain gum plants, **onycha** is from certain shellfish or mollusks, and **galbanum** is another kind of gum resin. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 30:35

And you shall make it {into} incense, an ointment, the work of an ointment mixer

This could mean: (1) Moses was to have a perfumer do the work or (2) Moses was to do the work himself the way a perfumer would do it. See how you translated these words in Exodus 30:25.

Exodus 30:36

And you shall pulverize & And you shall put

Here, **you** probably refers to Moses. (See: **Forms of You (p.1353)**)

before the face of

Alternate translation: [in front of] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

the testimony

Here, **testimony** probably refers to the sacred chest that contained the tablets of the law. See UST. (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

a holiest holy thing

Here, **holiest holy** means extremely or uniquely holy. If this form would not express that this item would become uniquely holy in your language you may need to find another way to express this idea. See how you translated this in Exodus 29:37. Alternate translation: [a most holy thing] or [extraordinarily holy] (See: **Possession (p.1425)**)

to you

Here, **you** is plural and refers to Moses and all the people. If your language makes a distinction, use a plural form here. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

Exodus 30:37

you shall & make {any

The word **you** here refers to the people of Israel. If your language makes a distinction, use a plural form here. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

with its formula

Alternate translation: [with the same ingredients] or [with the same items.] See how you translated this in Exodus 30:32.

It must be holy to Yahweh for you

Alternate translation: [You must consider it to be most holy]

Exodus 30:38

to smell it

This could mean: (1) to enjoy the scent for oneself (2) to wear as a perfume.

shall be cut off from his people

See how you translated **cut off** in Exodus 12:15. (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

shall be cut off from his people

See how you translated **cut off** in 12:15. (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 31

Exodus 31 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

- v. 1–11: Selection of the skilled craftsmen
- v. 12–17: Sabbath instruction
- v. 18: the end of Exodus' recording of the law of Moses (See: **law, law of Moses, law of Yahweh, law of God (p.1480)**)

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Sabbath

As described in this chapter, the Sabbath is more than just a day of worship or celebration. Its significance extends beyond a way to help people rest. It is a major part of the identity of the Hebrew people. (See: **Sabbath (p.1484)**)

Exodus 31:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 31:2

I have called by name

Yahweh speaks of choosing specific people as calling them by name. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: [I have chosen] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Bezalel & Uri & Hur

These are names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

Exodus 31:3

And I have filled him with the Spirit of God

Yahweh speaks of giving Bezalel his spirit as if Bezalel were a container and God's spirit were a liquid. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [I have given my spirit to Bezalel] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

with skill

If your language does not use an abstract noun for this idea, you can express the idea behind the abstract noun **skill** in another way. Alternate translation: [so he can work skillfully] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

and with understanding

If your language does not use an abstract noun for this idea, you can express the idea behind the abstract noun **understanding** in another way. Alternate translation: [and so he can understand his work] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

and with knowledge

If your language does not use an abstract noun for this idea, you can express the idea behind the abstract noun **knowledge** in another way. Alternate translation: [and so he knows his work well] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

and with all kinds of craftsmanship

If your language does not use an abstract noun for this idea, you can express the idea behind the abstract noun **craftsmanship** in another way. Alternate translation: [and for making all kinds of crafts] or [and so that he can make all kinds of things] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

Exodus 31:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 31:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 31:6

Oholiab & Ahisamak

These are names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

And I have put skill into the hearts of all of the skilled of heart

God speaks of making people able to make things as if he were putting the ability into their hearts. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: [I have given skill to all who are wise] or [I have made all who are wise able to make things well] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Exodus 31:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 31:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 31:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 31:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 31:11

They shall make

They refers to Bezalel and Oholiab as well as the unnamed other “skilled of heart” (talented craftsmen) referred to in 31:2 and 31:6. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

Exodus 31:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 31:13

saying

A second-level direct quotation starts after **saying**. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this by marking it with second-level quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation within a quotation. There are multiple possible endings for this quotation, which will be addressed in later verses. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1436)**)

Surely you shall keep my Sabbaths

Yahweh uses the phrase **keep my Sabbaths** as a metaphor for obeying his instructions about the Sabbath, as if it was a precious thing they should guard. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [You must certainly obey Yahweh's instructions about the Sabbath] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

throughout your generations

Alternate translation: [through all the generations of your descendants.] See how you translated this in Exodus 12:14.

Exodus 31:14

to you

One possible ending place for the second-level quotation that began in the previous verse is after **to you**. The rest of Yahweh's instructions to Moses in this section do not use the second person to address Israel directly, so you may close the second-level quotation here. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1436)**)

shall surely be put to death

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [you must surely kill] or [you must surely execute] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

shall be cut off

See how you translated **cut off** in 12:15. (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 31:15

six

Alternate translation: [6] (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

but the seventh day

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use cardinal numbers here. Alternate translation: [but day 7] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1414)**)

is a Sabbath of Sabbath

Alternate translation: [a Sabbath of complete rest]

shall surely be put to death

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [you must surely kill] or [you must surely execute] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 31:16

And the sons of Israel shall keep the Sabbath

Yahweh uses the phrase **keep my Sabbaths** as a metaphor for obeying his instructions about the Sabbath, as if it was a precious thing they should guard. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [And the sons of Israel must obey Yahweh's instructions about the Sabbath] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

throughout their generations

See how you translated "throughout their people's generations" in Exodus 12:42. Alternate translation: [; they and all the generations of their descendants must observe it.]

A covenant of eternity

Alternate translation: [A covenant that will always exist] or [A lasting covenant]

Exodus 31:17

and was refreshed

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [and he refreshed himself] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 31:18

written by the finger of God

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [which Yahweh wrote on with his own hand] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 32

Exodus 32 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

The events in verses 1–6 of this chapter occurred while Moses spoke with God and therefore happened sometime during the events recorded between Exodus 24:15 and Exodus 31. (See: **Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship (p.1325)**)

- v. 1–6: The people ask Aaron to make them a god and he makes the golden calf
- v. 7–29 - Yahweh and Moses' reaction
- v. 11–14 - Moses intercedes for the people
- v. 30–34 - Moses intercedes for the people

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 32:18.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Idolatry

The making of the golden calf was considered a form of idolatry. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 32:1

This chapter begins with a major scene shift, which may need to be marked in a certain way in your language. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

And the people saw

Here, the word **saw** is used to indicate understanding or realization of a situation. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And the people realized] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

and the people gathered themselves

This means the people both decided to gather and were the ones gathering. Use a way that is natural in your language to indicate this. (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p.1442)**)

Arise

Arise strengthens the force of the command following it. The people were demanding that Aaron make an idol for them. It did not necessarily mean that he should literally stand up. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

shall go before our faces

Here, **before our faces** means ahead of. The Israelites want idols to lead them. Alternate translation: [shall lead us] or [shall be our leader] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

for this Moses

People showed disrespect by putting the word **this** before his name, as if Moses were someone they did not know and could not trust. They were creating social distance between him and themselves. When translating, use a form in your language that communicates the same sense of disassociation between people.

Exodus 32:2

and bring them

Here, **them** refers to the golden rings. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

Exodus 32:3

all the people

This refers to all the people who rejected Moses as their leader and Yahweh as their God. Later parts of the text reveal that there were people still faithful to Moses and Yahweh and that the Israelites had a great deal more gold. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language that means many or most. Alternate translation: [many people] (See: **Hyperbole (p.1371)**)

Exodus 32:4

and fashioned it with a tool, and he made a calf of molten metal

Most likely this means that Aaron melted the gold and poured it into a mold that had the shape of a calf. When the gold cooled and became hard, he removed the mold, and the hardened gold had the shape of a calf. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

And they said

The identity of the speakers, referred to as **they**, remains unknown. Alternate translation: [And someone said] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

These are your gods, & brought you up

Because the speaker of this sentence is unknown and mentioned in the plural, it is possible that it is the people speaking. In that case, it would be possible for a translation to use the first person rather than second person here. Alternate translation: [These are our gods ... brought us up] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1351)**)

These are your gods

In the text, there only appears to be one “god” (the golden calf idol) presented to Israel. If it would be clearer to your audience, you may consider translating **these ... gods** as singular. Alternate translation: [this is your god]

Exodus 32:5

And Aaron saw

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express what he saw explicitly. “Aaron saw what the people did” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

before the face of it

Here, **before its face** means in front of. Alternate translation: [in front of it] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

before the face of it

Here, **it** is the golden bull-calf. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [in front of the bull-calf idol] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 32:6

to play

This word may imply drunken and sexual sin (for a sexual implication see Genesis 26:8). However, the only actions mentioned in the text are singing (v. 18) and dancing (v. 19), so translators should avoid using a term that is overly suggestive. Alternate translation: [to revel] (See: **Euphemism (p.1345)**)

Exodus 32:7

Here there is a scene shift back to the top of the mountain with Moses and Yahweh, which may need to be marked in a certain way in your language. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

have corrupted themselves

Here, **themselves** is used to indicate that the Israelites actions made the Israelites corrupt. Use a way that is natural in your language to indicate this. Alternate translation: [have acted corruptly] (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p. 1442)**)

Exodus 32:8

They have quickly turned from the way that I commanded them

Here God speaks of the people disobeying what he commanded them as if he had told them to walk on a certain road, and they left that road. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [They have quickly stopped doing what I commanded them to do] or [They have quickly stopped obeying what I commanded them to do] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

These are your gods, Israel, that brought you up from the land of Egypt

This is a second-level direct quotation. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this by marking it with second-level quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation within a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.1436)**)

These are your gods, Israel, that brought you up from the land of Egypt

You may want to translate this as an indirect quotation in order to reduce the layers of quotations in this passage. Alternate translation: [that these are your gods, Israel, that brought you up from the land of Egypt] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1439)**)

These are your gods

In the text, there only appears to be one “god” (the golden calf idol) presented to Israel. If it would be clearer to your audience, you may consider translating **these ... gods** as singular. See how you translated this in 32:4. Alternate translation: [This is your god]

your gods, & brought you up

Because the speaker of this sentence is unknown and mentioned in the plural, it is possible that it is the people speaking. In that case, it would be possible for a translation to use the first person rather than second person here. See how you translated this in 32:4. Alternate translation: [our gods ... brought us up] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1351)**)

Exodus 32:9

is a people hard of neck

Yahweh speaks of the people being rebellious as if they had hard necks. The image comes from an animal that does not want to go the way his master is trying to direct him (not going in the way God commanded). If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [is a rebellious people] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

this & it

The word **people** is a collective noun, so the pronouns referring to the people are singular. You may use plural pronouns if that is the normal usage in your language. Alternate translation: [these ... they] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1304)**)

Exodus 32:10

So now

So now is used here to mark that Yahweh's next statements are a result of what he has said in the previous verses. Alternate translation: [Therefore] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1320)**)

And let my nose burn against them

This is an idiom meaning that Yahweh is angry. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: [And let me be angry with them] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

you

Here, **you** refers to Moses. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

Exodus 32:11

Yahweh, why does your nose burn against your people whom you have brought out from the land of Egypt with great power and with a strong hand

Moses used this question to try to persuade Yahweh not to be so angry with his people. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [Yahweh, do not let your nose burn against your people whom you have brought out from the land of Egypt with great power and with a strong hand.] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1445)**)

does your nose burn against your people

This is an idiom meaning that Yahweh is angry with his people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: [are you angry with your people] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

with great power and with a strong hand

These two phrases share similar meanings and are combined for emphasis. If doubling in this way would not convey emphasis in your language, you will need to find a way to translate it that does give emphasis. Alternate translation: [using your very strong power] (See: **Doublet (p.1338)**)

and with a strong hand

Here, **hand** represents God's actions or works. See how you translated this in Exodus 6:1. Alternate translation: [and with powerful works] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 32:12

Why should the Egyptians say, saying, ‘He brought them out with evil intent, to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from on the face of the ground

Moses used this question to try to persuade God not to destroy his people. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [If you destroy your people, the Egyptians might say, ‘He brought them out with evil intent, to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from on the face of the ground.’] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1445)**)

should the Egyptians say, saying, ‘He brought them out with evil intent, to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from on the face of the ground

After **saying,** this is a second-level quotation. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with second-level quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation within a quotation. However, you may want to translate this as an indirect quotation in order to reduce the layers of quotations in this passage. Alternate translation: [the Egyptians say that you brought them out with evil intent, to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from on the face of the ground] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p. 1439)**)

from on the face of the ground

Here, **face** means “surface.” Alternate translation: [from the surface of the land] or [from the earth] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Turn from your burning nose

Alternate translation: [Stop your burning anger] or [Stop being so angry]

Turn from your burning nose and repent from the evil to your people

Here, Yahweh’s anger (burning nose) and plan to punish the people are spoken of as things that he could turn away from and repent of (repentance also means to turn from). This imagery may not translate into your language, and you may need to use a different expression. Alternate translation: [Calm down, and please do not stay determined to do evil to your people] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

from your burning nose

This is an idiom that means anger. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: [from your terrible anger] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Exodus 32:13

Remember

Alternate translation: [Think about]

you swore

Alternate translation: [you made an oath]

and I will give to your descendants all this land of which I have spoken

That is, the land of Canaan.

Exodus 32:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 32:15

The tablets were written on both their sides, on this {side} and on that {side} they were written

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [Yahweh had written on both the sides of the tablets, on this side and on that side he had written.] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 32:16

And the tablets, they {were} the work of God. And the writing, it {was} the writing of God

These two sentences have an unusual structure that places emphasis on **tablets** and **writing**. If your language would emphasize these topics in a different way than moving them to the beginning of the sentence, follow your language's natural usage for emphasis. Alternate translation: [And the tablets themselves were the work of God. And the writing itself was the writing of God] (See: **Information Structure (p.1380)**)

Exodus 32:17

Joshua

Joshua was last mentioned in Exodus 24:13. The text does not say if he was on top of the mountain with Moses or if he waited for him part way up. Consider if your language will need to re-introduce Joshua in any way here. (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1385)**)

Exodus 32:18

There is not the sound of singing of strength, and there is not the sound of singing of weakness, the sound of singing I am hearing

These lines are widely considered to be poetic. It is not clear why a poetic form is used here. In some languages it may not be appropriate to convey this response in poetic form, in which case another form may be used. (See: **Poetry (p.1422)**)

There is not the sound of singing of strength, and there is not the sound of singing of weakness, the sound of singing I am hearing

The poetic form here is parallelism in the repetition of **sound of singing**. If it would be unclear to say that Moses heard **the sound of singing** in the third line after saying he did not hear the sound of singing twice before, something more like the more contrastive UST may be followed. (See: **Parallelism (p.1417)**)

the sound of singing I am hearing

If it is unclear to say that Moses hears **the sound of singing** after twice saying he did not hear that, you may want to make the type of singing explicit. Consider referring to your translation of the last word of 32:6 (to play in the ULT). Alternate translation: [the sound of playful singing I hear] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 32:19

and the nose of Moses burned

This is an idiom for being angry. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: [and Moses was very angry] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

under

Alternate translation: [at the bottom of]

Exodus 32:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 32:21

that you have brought a great sin on them

Moses spoke of causing people to **sin** as if sin were an object and Aaron put it **on them**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [that you have caused them to sin greatly] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 32:22

Do not let {your} nose burn

This is an idiom for anger. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: [Do not be angry] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

that it {is/was} in evil

This is probably an idiom that could mean (1) that the people are prone to evil or (2) that the people were in trouble (that is, they felt troubled because of not having contact with God). If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: [that they are set on evil] (See: **Idiom (p. 1378)**)

it {is/was

Here, **it** is used because **people** is grammatically singular in Hebrew. Alternate translation: [they are] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1351)**)

Exodus 32:23

Make for us a god that will go before our faces. As for this Moses, the man that brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has happened to him

This is a second-level quotation. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with second-level quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation within a quotation. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1439)**)

this Moses, the man

People showed disrespect by putting the word **this** before his name, as if Moses were someone they did not know and could not trust. They were creating social distance between him and themselves. When translating, use a form in your language that communicates the same sense of disassociation between people. See how you translated this in 32:1.

Exodus 32:24

And I said to them, ‘Whoever has gold, take it off yourself

Whoever has gold, take it off yourself is a second-level quotation. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with second-level quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation within a quotation. However, this can be stated as an indirect quote. Alternate translation: [So I told them that whoever had any gold should take it off] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1439)**)

take it off yourself

Aaron instructs people to take their own gold off. Alternate translation: [you take off your own] (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p.1442)**)

and I threw it in the fire, and this calf came out

Aaron claims an unusual sequence of events here. The translation should surprise an audience unfamiliar with the story. He states that the result of simply throwing gold in the fire is the appearance (by its own power or volition it seems) of the calf. This is a lie. (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1320)**)

Exodus 32:25

was let loose

Alternate translation: [were behaving wildly] or [were not controlling themselves]

that it was let loose, for Aaron had let it loose

Here, the pronoun **it** agrees with the grammatical number of **people** (singular). If your language does not use singular nouns in that way, you can use a different expression. Alternate translation: [that they were let loose, for Aaron had let them loose] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1304)**)

Exodus 32:26

and said, “Who {is} for Yahweh, & me!” & to

If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: [and said that whoever was for Yahweh should come to him] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1333)**)

Who {is} for Yahweh

Moses speaks of being loyal to Yahweh as being **for Yahweh**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: [Whoever serves Yahweh] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Exodus 32:27

Pass through and return from gate to gate in the camp

Alternate translation: [Go from one side of the camp to the other, starting at one entrance to the camp and going to the entrance on the other side of the camp]

Exodus 32:28

about 3,000

Alternate translation: [about three thousand] (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

Exodus 32:29

Fill your hand

This seems to be an idiom for giving authority to someone. See how you translated this in Exodus 28:41. However, this usage is different from that text, as here it is not specified what authority they are given or what they are consecrated for other than **for Yahweh**. Alternate translation: [Consecrate yourselves] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Fill your hand for Yahweh today

Here it is unclear if **fill** should be rightly understood as in the past or as a new command. You may want to follow the decision of another translation your people are familiar with. Alternate translation: [You have filled your hand for Yahweh today]

For a man {was} against his son and against his brother

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express the fact that they did this in obedience to God explicitly. Alternate translation: [For you have obeyed Yahweh, because each man was against his son and against his brother] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

and for putting a blessing on yourselves today

This phrase is difficult to interpret. Several options depend on exactly how the conjunction, preposition, and verb combination are interpreted. The first difficulty is related to the difficulty with the previous verb: have they already been blessed or are they going to be blessed? (Alternate translation: [to have put a blessing on yourselves today]) The second difficulty is: should the clause connections be understood to say that the blessing is because of their actions, or more strongly, that a desire for blessing motivated them to take action? (Alternate translation: [and therefore a blessing is put on you today] or [so that a blessing may be put over you today]) The third difficulty is: while ultimately all blessing is from Yahweh, which is the subject here, Yahweh or the Levites? (Alternate translation: [and so Yahweh is putting a blessing on you today]) As with the previous clause, you may want to follow the decision of another translation your people are familiar with. Alternate translation: [, by that you brought blessing on yourselves]

Exodus 32:30

have sinned a great sin

Here, **sin** is used as a verb and then repeated as a noun for emphasis. Along with **great**, it suggests that the people sinned very, very badly. If the repetition of words in this way would not create emphasis, use another form in your language that would. Alternate translation: [You have sinned extremely badly] (See: **Doublet (p.1338)**)

have sinned a great sin. & your sin

If your language does not use an abstract noun for **sin**, you can express the idea behind it in another way. See the UST. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

Exodus 32:31

this people has sinned & sin

Here, **sin** is used as a verb and then repeated as a noun for emphasis. Along with **great**, it suggests that the people sinned very, very badly. If the repetition of words in this way would not create emphasis, use another form in your language that would. Alternate translation: [this people has sinned extremely badly] (See: **Doublet (p.1338)**)

sin

If your language does not use an abstract noun for **sin**, you can express the idea behind it in another way. See the UST. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

gods of

Alternate translation: [a god]

Exodus 32:32

But now, if you forgive their sin

Moses leaves out his conclusion, perhaps as a way of making this conditional phrase into a request, or perhaps to avoid suggesting to God what would be good for him to do. However, if leaving out a conclusion would be misunderstood in your language you may need to rephrase it or add the implied conclusion. Alternate translation: [But now, if you forgive their sin, good!] (See: **Ellipsis (p.1340)**)

blot me out of

Here, **me** refers to the name of Moses. Alternate translation: [erase my name from] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

that you have written

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express what God had written in the book explicitly. Alternate translation: [in which you have written the names of your people] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 32:33

I will blot him out from my book

Here, **him** represents that person's name. Alternate translation: [I will erase that person's name from my book]
(See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

from my book

This refers to the book of Yahweh that Moses spoke of in Exodus 32:32.

Exodus 32:34

But on the day I visit them, then I will visit their sin on them

Yahweh makes it clear that he will punish the people because they sinned by making and worshiping the idol. 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: [However, because they sinned, one day I will come to punish them.] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1320)**)

Exodus 32:35

they had made the calf (that Aaron made

The people are being spoken of as having made the calf themselves (along with Aaron) because they demanded it and gave their gold for it. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [they were guilty along with Aaron of making the calf] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

And Yahweh plagued the people because they had made the calf (that Aaron made

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: [And because they had made the calf (that Aaron made), Yahweh plagued the people] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1320)**)

Exodus 33

Exodus 33 Chapter Introduction

This chapter is largely about Moses continuing to negotiate for a closer relationship between Yahweh and himself and Yahweh and the people. There are a number of important theological issues addressed, especially Yahweh's holiness and character. Several key terms appear.

Structure and Formatting

- v. 1–6: Moses negotiating with Yahweh to go with Israel
- v. 7–11: the temporary tent of meeting
- v. 12–23: Moses negotiating with Yahweh to see his glory

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Yahweh's statement to Moses in verse 5 seems to have happened before the people's reaction in verse 4, so in some languages you may need to reverse them.

Verses 7–11 seem to be background, general information about a somewhat unspecified time period. Be sure this is clear in how you structure these verses. See the beginning of verse 7 in the UST. While the term in verses 7–11 is often used interchangeably with the Dwelling that will be built in chapters 35–39, it is a temporary and different tent. One distinguishing feature is that it is well outside the camp, while the Dwelling will be in the center of the camp.

The word **tent** in verses 7–11 refers either to this temporary "tent of meeting" that Moses set up or to the tents that the Israelites lived in. Pay attention throughout these verses to which tent is referred to.

Exodus 33:1

saying, ‘I will give it to your seed

The words which follow **saying** are a second-level quotation. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with second-level quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate a quotation within a quotation. However, you may want to translate this as an indirect quotation in order to reduce the layers of quotations in this passage. See UST. (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.1439)**)

Exodus 33:2

And I will send an angel before your face, and I will drive out the Canaanites, the Amorites and the Hittites and the Perizzites, Hivites and the Jebusites

See how you translated these in Exodus 23:20 and 23:23.

Exodus 33:3

with} milk and honey

Here, **milk** is a metonym for domestic animals and the food products obtained from them; **honey** is a metonym for the food obtained from growing plants. See how you translated this in Exodus 3:8. (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

flowing {with} milk and honey

God spoke of the land being good for animals and plants as if the milk and honey from those animals and plants were flowing through the land. See how you translated this in Exodus 3:8. (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

hard of neck

Yahweh speaks of the people being rebellious as if they had **hard necks**. See how you translated this in Exodus 32:9. (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 33:4

and each one did not put his ornaments on him

Here, **his** and **him** refer to both men and women. Alternate translation: [and the men and women did not put on their ornaments] (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1465)**)

his ornaments

This may have referred to beautiful clothing as well as chains and rings made from gold or silver that had could have had jewels in them. Alternate translation: [his adornments] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Yahweh's statement to Moses in verse 5 seems to have happened before the people's reaction in verse 4, so in some languages you may need to reverse them. (See: **Verse Bridges (p.1463)**)

Exodus 33:5

And Yahweh {had} said

The word **had** places Yahweh's statement back in time. It can be understood from context as Yahweh's statement to Moses in verse 5 seems to have happened before the people's reaction in verse 4. If you are reversing the order of the verses for your language, you should adjust the verbal sequencing in your translation. (See: **Order of Events (p.1412)**)

Say to the sons of Israel

You may want to make the introductory portion of this quotation,**Say to the sons of Israel**, indirect to keep from having a quote inside a quote. See the UST. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1333)**)

hard of neck

Yahweh speaks of the people being rebellious as if they had **hard necks**. See how you translated this in Exodus 32:9. (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

If} I went up among you {for} one moment, then I {would} destroy you. And now

Because the surrounding narrative clearly shows that this is not what Yahweh did or will do, this is a hypothetical situation. Some languages may need to reorder the clauses. Alternate translation: [Since I would destroy if I went up among you for one moment, then] (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1318)**)

And now, take your ornaments down from on you, and I will know what I will do to you

The goal of the Israelites removing their ornaments is so that Yahweh can consider his reaction. Some languages may need to reorder this structure. Alternate translation: [So that I will know what I will do to you, take your ornaments down from on you] (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.1315)**)

And now, take your ornaments down from on you

This was a way for the Israelites to show that they were sorry for sinning. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 33:6

And & stripped themselves

Here, **themselves** refers to the Israelites; they are both the ones doing the action and the ones to whom the action is done. A special form of verb or pronoun may be required to translate this in your language. (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p.1442)**)

from Mount Horeb

Here, **from** means “from that point of time and continuing into the future.” Try to find a form in your language that means “from then on” for your translation. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 33:7

Verses 7–11 seem to be background, general information about a somewhat unspecified time period. Be sure this is clear in how you structure these verses. See the beginning of verse 7 in the UST. (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1307)**)

a tent

The word **tent** in verses 7–11 refers either to this temporary “tent of meeting” that Moses set up, or to the tents that the Israelites lived in. Pay attention throughout these verses to which tent is being referenced. Here it refers to the “tent of meeting.”

Exodus 33:8

his tent

This refers to the people’s tents.

Exodus 33:9

the pillar of cloud

See how you translated this in 13:21.

would come down

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express where the **pillar of cloud would come down** from explicitly. Alternate translation: [would come down from the sky] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

and he would speak

Grammatically, the most likely referent for this pronoun is the **pillar of cloud**. By metonymy and based on 33:11, this probably refers to Yahweh. (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 33:10

And all of the people saw the pillar of cloud standing {at} the entrance of the tent, and all of the people would get up and bow down, each {at} the entrance of his tent

This verse uses contrastive parallelism. The presence of Yahweh is represented in the cloud that stands at the entrance of the tent, while the people prostrate themselves at the entrance to their tents. It would be good to try to retain the contrasting image in your translation if possible. (See: **Parallelism (p.1417)**)

the pillar of cloud

See how you translated this in 13:21.

his tent

This refers to the people's tents.

Exodus 33:11

face to face

Speaking directly to each other rather than through dreams and visions is spoken of as if Moses and God saw each other's faces while they spoke. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Yahweh would speak directly to Moses] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

as a man speaks to his friend

The metaphor of speaking **face to face** is explained by the simile here. How you translated **face to face** in your language may determine how you should translate this explanation. (See: **Simile (p.1449)**)

but his servant Joshua son of Nun, a young man

Joshua has been introduced before but not mentioned since Exodus 32:17. Consider if your language will need to re-introduce Joshua in any way here. (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.1385)**)

Exodus 33:12

A new scene begins here, which may need to be marked in a certain way in your language. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

Take this people up,’ & I know you by name, and you have also found favor in my eyes

You may want to make these two second-level quotations indirect to reduce the levels of quotation. See the UST. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1333)**)

See

This is an interjection to get someone’s attention. Alternate translation: [Look!] or [Listen!] or [Pay attention to what I am about to tell you]

I know you by name

To **know** someone **by name** is to know them well. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: [I know you well] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

and you have also found favor in my eyes

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [and my eyes find you favorable] (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1280)**)

and you have also found favor in my eyes

Here, **found favor in my eyes** is an idiom that means “I am pleased with you” so it means that God is pleased with Moses. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: [and you please me] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

and you have also found favor in my eyes

Here, **in my eyes** is a metaphor representing God’s evaluation. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and you have also found favor in my evaluation] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

and you have also found favor in my eyes

Here, **favor** is an abstract noun that you could express in another way if necessary in your language. Alternate translation: [and you have also been found approved in my eyes] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

Exodus 33:13

I have found favor in your eyes, & I can find favor in your eyes

Here, **found favor in your eyes** is an idiom that means that God is pleased with Moses. You may also need to make the phrase active in form and change the abstract noun **favor** into another form. Finally, **in your eyes** is a metaphor representing his evaluation. See how you dealt with the multiple issues in the phrase **you have found favor in my eyes** in Exodus 33:12.

please cause me to know your ways

Here, **ways** is a metaphor either: (1) for Yahweh's plans or (2) for the holy life he requires. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: (1) [please cause me to know what you are going to do in the future]; (2) "please cause me to know how people can do what pleases you" (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

I can find favor in your eyes

This instance of the phrase **find favor in your eyes** means in the future. Consider how to translate it in your language to convey an on-going situation. Alternate translation: [I can always find favor in your eyes]

And see that this nation is your people

Moses is requesting that Yahweh would again **see**, perceive, consider, or recognize the Israelites as his special people. In this way, Moses would know that Yahweh had truly forgiven them.

Exodus 33:14

My face will go

Yahweh's **face** represents his presence, which represents himself. Alternate translation: [I will go] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

My face will go, and I will cause rest for you

The preposition connected to **you** here has a very flexible meaning and seems to be connected to both **will go** and **will cause rest**. If this would be unclear, consider repeating it in both clauses. Alternate translation: [My face will go with you and I will cause rest for you] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

for you

The word **you** here refers to Moses. It is singular. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1356)**)

Exodus 33:15

If your face {is} not going

If your face is not going is a hypothetical situation in which Moses makes a request that they not go anywhere without Yahweh. In some languages you may need to place the request first. Alternate translation: [Do not take us up from here if your face is not going] (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1318)**)

If your face {is} not going

Yahweh's **face** represents his presence, which represents himself. Alternate translation: [If you are not going] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 33:16

And in what then will it be known that I have found favor in your eyes, I and your people? {Is it} not in your going with us? And I and your people shall be distinct from all of the people that {are} on the face of the earth

This verse contains two or three rhetorical questions, and the length of the second is debated. The first rhetorical question, "**And in what then will it be known that I have found favor in your eyes, I and your people?**" is used for emphasis and means, "There is only one way people will know that I and your people please you." The second, "**Is it not in your going with us?**" is used to answer the first question and means "That way is your going with us." It is possible that the rest of the verse is (1) a statement further clarifying how Yahweh's favor is demonstrated (ULT, UST), (2) an extension of the second rhetorical question ("Is it not in your going with us so that I and your people shall be distinct from all of the people that are on the face of the earth?"), or (3) a separate rhetorical question making the same point ("And shall I and your people be distinct from all of the people that are on the face of the earth?") Moses used these questions in order to emphasize that if Yahweh does not go with them, no one will know that Yahweh is pleased with Moses and the people. Use whatever forms would be natural in your language to present an argument like this. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.1445)**)

And in what

This refers back to Moses' hypothetical situation in the previous verse, that is, Yahweh not going with them. Use whatever connecting forms are necessary to make that clear. (See: **Information Structure (p.1380)**)

And in what then will it be known

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [And in what then will people know] (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1280)**)

I have found favor in your eyes

Here, **found favor** is an idiom that means that God is pleased with Moses. You may also need to make the phrase active in form and change the abstract noun **favor** into another form. Finally, **eyes** are a metonym for sight, and sight is a metaphor representing his evaluation. See how you dealt with the multiple issues in the phrase **you have found favor in my eyes** in Exodus 33:12. (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Exodus 33:17

I will also do this thing that you have spoken, for you have found favor in my eyes, and I know you by name

Here, **for** signals a reason clause. 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 you have found favor in my eyes, and I know you by name, I will also do this thing that you have spoken] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1320)**)

you have found favor in my eyes

Here, **you have found favor in my eyes** is an idiom that means that God is pleased with Moses. You may also need to make the phrase active in form and change the abstract noun **favor** into another form. Finally, **eyes** are a metonym for sight, and sight is a metaphor representing his evaluation. See how you dealt with the multiple issues in the phrase **you have found favor in my eyes** in Exodus 33:12. (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

you have found

Here, **you** is singular and refers to Moses. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.1356)**)

and I know you by name

To know someone by name is to know them well. See how you translated this in Exodus 33:12. Alternate translation: [and I know you well] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Exodus 33:18

your glory

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **glory**, you can express the same idea in another way. See the UST. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

Exodus 33:19

I myself will cause all my goodness to pass over above your face

Yahweh speaks of his **goodness** like it was an object that he could move over Moses. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. See the UST. (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

my goodness

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **goodness**, you can express the same idea in another way. See the UST. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

above your face, & before your face

Here, **face** means “you.” Alternate translation: [above you ... before you] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

and I will proclaim in the name of Yahweh

The meaning of the phrase is unclear. It may mean that Yahweh will disclose something about his character to Moses. Alternate translation: [and I will proclaim my name, ‘Yahweh,’]

and I will favor whom I will favor, and I will be compassionate to whom I will be compassionate

These statements use parallelism internally and between each other. They stress Yahweh’s divine prerogative to do whatever he wants. The structure also parallels Yahweh’s I AM statements in Exodus 3:14. If this form of parallelism would be misunderstood in your language, consider another form that emphasizes that Yahweh is graciously kind to exactly those and only those to whom he chooses to show kindness, and he does so without outside influence. (See: **Parallelism (p.1417)**)

Exodus 33:20

But he said

In some languages it may be better to omit **And he said** at the start of this verse to avoid stopping and restarting the quotation. Yahweh is speaking from 33:19–34:3. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1434)**)

for mankind can not see me and live

Alternate translation: [because no person can live after he has seen me]

Exodus 33:21

And Yahweh said

In some languages it may be better to omit **And Yahweh said** at the start of this verse to avoid stopping and restarting the quotation. Yahweh is speaking from 33:19–34:3. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1434)**)

Behold

Alternate translation: [Look] or [Listen] or [Pay attention to what I am about to tell you.]

Exodus 33:22

while my glory passes over

Yahweh speaks of his **glory** as if it were an object that he could move over Moses. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [while I pass over gloriously] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

my glory

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **glory**, you can express the same idea in another way. See the UST. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

and my hand will cover over you

Here Yahweh speaks as if he, like a person, had hands that could cover things. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a simile to retain the image, as this figure is important to retain and extends into the next verse. Alternate translation: [I will cover you as with a hand] (See: **Personification (p.1420)**)

Exodus 33:23

Then I will take away my hand, and you will see my back, but my face will not be seen

The strong personification image of Yahweh continues throughout this verse and should be retained, if possible. You may have to use similes if this would be misunderstood in your culture. Alternate translation: [Then it will be as if I stop covering you with a hand, and you will see a small part of my glory, like a person's back, but not my full glory, like a person's face.] (See: **Personification (p.1420)**)

but my face

Here, **but my face** is moved to the front of the clause to emphasize contrast with **my back**. If your language has a certain way of contrasting elements, be sure to make a strong contrast between Yahweh's face and back. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1313)**)

but my face will not be seen

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [but you will not see my face] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 34

Exodus 34 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

- v. 1–4 Yahweh orders Moses to return to the mountain
- v. 5–9 Yahweh reveals himself to Moses and Moses reacts
- v. 10–28 Covenant renewal
- v. 29–34 Moses reports to Israel

Translation Issues in This Chapter

- In verse 1, Yahweh says he will write on stone tablets, yet later (v. 27–28) he commands Moses to write and the text says Moses writes.
- Yahweh reveals something significant about himself or his character to Moses. There are a number of difficult terms and concepts.
- The biblical metaphor of true worship as sexual fidelity appears in v. 14–16.
- Several verses are repeated either exactly or closely from earlier chapters.
- In v. 12–26 Yahweh appears to give a different 10 commandments from those in Exodus 20 (but also largely repeated from other earlier parts of Exodus), raising the question of what was actually written on the stone tablets in v. 28.
- The concept of Moses's shining face may be difficult in some cultures.

"He will bring the punishment for the fathers' sin on their children"

This phrase does not mean that a child is necessarily punished for the sins of their parents. Many scholars believe that this passage indicates that a parent's sins will have consequences that will affect their children and grandchildren. (See: **sin, sinful, sinner, sinning (p.1486)**)

Exodus 34:1

And Yahweh said to Moses

Yahweh continues to speak to Moses, but there is a change of topic here, so you may want to retain the speech introduction. However, if it would be misunderstood, you could simply continue the quotation from the previous verse. Alternate translation: [Yahweh continued] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.1434)**)

that you broke

This clause reminds the reader of what tablets are being mentioned by reminding you of what had happened to the previous tablets. If it would be more helpful in your language to attach it to the first mention of the tablets in this verse, you could rearrange it like the UST. (See: **Information Structure (p.1380)**)

tablets of stone

Alternate translation: [flat slabs of stone] See how you translated this in Exodus 31:18

Exodus 34:2

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 34:3

and also let a man not be seen on all of the mountain

Being seen doing something represents doing that. Alternate translation: [and do not let anyone else be anywhere on the mountain] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Also let not the flocks and the herds graze to the front of that mountain

Alternate translation: [Even flocks or herds are not allowed to come near the mountain to eat.]

Exodus 34:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 34:5

and stood with him there, and he pronounced

The pronouns are not clear here, but the referents are probably as in the following alternate translation. Alternate translation: [and Yahweh stood with Moses there, and Yahweh proclaimed] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

and he pronounced in the name of Yahweh

This could mean: (1) “he spoke the name ‘Yahweh’” (2) “he proclaimed who Yahweh is.” For the second meaning, **name** would represent who God is. (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 34:6

Yahweh, Yahweh, a God compassionate and gracious

God is speaking about himself. If this is confusing in your language, you may use the first person. Alternate translation: [I, Yahweh, am God, and I am merciful and gracious] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1351)**)

compassionate and gracious

This is emphasizing that Yahweh cares for people and acts kindly toward them. If doubling would not strengthen the statement here in your language, consider another form that would. (See: **Doublet (p.1338)**)

long of nostril

The phrase **long of nostril** is an idiom that means Yahweh does not get angry easily or quickly. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: [slow to anger] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

and abounding in covenant faithfulness and trustworthiness

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **covenant faithfulness** and **trustworthiness**, you can express the same idea in another way. (For **covenant faithfulness**, see Exodus 20:6). Alternate translation: [always being faithful to my covenant and always being trustworthy] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

covenant faithfulness and trustworthiness

This is emphasizing that Yahweh always does what he promises toward the people he loves. If doubling would not strengthen the statement here in your language, consider another form that would. (See: **Doublet (p.1338)**)

Exodus 34:7

keeping covenant faithfulness to thousands

See how you translated **covenant faithfulness** in the previous verse. Alternate translation: [faithfully loving thousands of generations] or [faithful to his covenant with thousands of generations] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p. 1278)**)

to thousands

This large number is used to mean “forever” or “to all descendants forever.” It is deliberately contrasted with **third** and **fourth** later in the verse to emphasize how much longer God’s covenant faithfulness is than his anger. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language that conveys a very long time. Alternate translation: [for every generation] (See: **Hyperbole (p.1371)**)

to thousands

The word **thousands** is a metonym for a number too many to count. Alternate translation: [to innumerable people] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

iniquity, transgression, and sin

This list is meant to convey the idea of every kind of wrong. If a list like this would be misunderstood in your language you may need to use other terms or forms to make this point. Alternate translation: [every kind of sin] (See: **Litany (p.1393)**)

iniquity, transgression, and sin. & the iniquity of

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **iniquity, transgression, and sin**, you can express the same ideas in another way., as modeled in the UST. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

But he will surely not acquit

Yahweh is speaking about himself. If this is confusing in your language, you may use the first person. Alternate translation: [But I will certainly not acquit] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.1351)**)

But he will surely not acquit

Whom Yahweh will not acquit is not stated. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: [But he will certainly not clear the guilty] or [But he will certainly not say that the guilty are innocent] or [But he will certainly not free guilty people] (See: **Ellipsis (p.1340)**)

the iniquity of

Here, **iniquity** refers to the consequences or the punishment for iniquity. Alternate translation: [the punishment for the iniquity of] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the sons and on the sons of the sons

The **iniquity of the fathers** is spoken of as if it were something capable of **visiting** people. This means that Yahweh makes the consequences of people's sins affect their descendants. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [punishing the sons and the sons of the sons for the iniquity of the fathers] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

on the sons and on the sons of the sons

The references to **sons** and **sons of the sons** represents descendants. Alternate translation: [on their descendants] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

on the third and on the fourth

Here, "generation" is implied after **third** and **fourth**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

on the third and on the fourth

Here, **third** and **fourth** means "several." If this would not be understood and your language has a way of referring to an unspecified (but approximately 3–4) number, you may have to use it here. Alternate translation: [on a few generations] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 34:8

and prostrated himself

Here, **himself** means that Moses did this action to his own body. Some languages may use a special form to indicate this. (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p.1442)**)

and bowed to the ground and prostrated himself

These two verbs have very similar meanings and are often used together to express people's physical and spiritual posture in worship. If such repetition would be misunderstood in your language, you may need to express the physical action and spiritual action explicitly. Alternate translation: [and bowed to the ground in worship] (See: **Doublet (p.1338)**)

Exodus 34:9

I have found favor in your eyes

Here, **found favor** is an idiom that means that God is pleased with Moses. You may also need to make the phrase active in form and change the abstract noun **favor** into another form. Finally, **eyes** are a metonym for sight, and sight is a metaphor representing his evaluation. See how you dealt with the multiple issues in the phrase **I have found favor in your eyes** in Exodus 33:12. (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

this {is} a people hard of neck

Moses speaks of the people being rebellious as if they had **hard necks**. See how you translated this in Exodus 32:9. (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

our iniquity and our sin

The words **iniquity** and **sin** mean basically the same thing and are combined for emphasis. If your language does not use repetition in this way, you can combine these phrases. Alternate translation: [all our sins] (See: **Doublet (p. 1338)**)

Exodus 34:10

Starting in this verse, the covenant is largely repeated and consists of two parts: (1) what Yahweh will do, which is detailed in verses 10–11 (and briefly restated in verse 24) and (2) what is required of the Israelites, which is detailed in verses 12–26. For further context, see Exodus 19:5 and 23:20–24:8. Verses 12–26 are another list of ten commandments.

am about to cut a covenant

To **cut a covenant** means to make a covenant. The terminology refers to ancient rituals around making covenants, which is illustrated in Genesis 15. See the imagery and how you translated there. Alternate translation: [am about to make a covenant] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

your people

Here, the **people** are referred to as belonging to Moses. This refers to his being their leader. Alternate translation: [the people you lead] (See: **Possession (p.1425)**)

all of the people that you are in the midst of

This phrase is ambiguous and could refer to: (1) the nations that surrounded Israel or (2) the Israelites (who surrounded Moses). Attempt to maintain the ambiguity if you can; otherwise you may choose one, perhaps following another locally known translation's choice.

for it {is} fear-filling, what I {am} doing with you

This means that what Yahweh is doing causes people to be afraid. In this case, people will fear Yahweh when they see what he does. Alternate translation: [for what I am doing with you will cause fear]

with you

Here, **you** refers to Moses and the people of Israel. If your language makes a distinction, use a plural form here. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural (p.1354)**)

Exodus 34:11

am about to drive out from before your face

Here, **from before your faces** means “ahead of you” or “on your behalf.” Yahweh is emphasizing who is doing the driving out. (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites

See how you translated these in Exodus 33:2. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

Exodus 34:12

yourself

Here, **yourself** means that each Israelite should guard against committing these sins. (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p. 1442)**)

lest you cut a covenant with the inhabitant of the land where you are about to go into, lest he become as a trap in your midst

This sentence contains two hypotheticals as a warning. Each is introduced by **lest**. Use a marker in your language that introduces a hypothetical situation, but also see the next note. Alternate translation: [If you were to cut a covenant with the inhabitant of the land where you are about to go into, probably he would become as a trap in your midst.] (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1375)**)

lest you cut a covenant with the inhabitant of the land where you are about to go into, lest he become as a trap in your midst

The second of these hypothetical statements is logically dependent on and follows after the first as a result. As you mark these hypotheticals, use a form that communicates that the second is a result of the first. Alternate translation: [because if you cut a covenant with the inhabitant of the land where you are about to go into, then he will become as a trap in your midst] (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1318)**)

you cut a covenant

See how you translated this in 34:10. (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

with the inhabitant of & he become

The word **inhabitant** is a singular noun that refers to any individual inhabitant or group of inhabitants from the peoples mentioned in the previous verse. The pronoun **he** is agreeing with that singular noun. If your language does not use singular nouns in that way, you can use a different expression. Alternate translation: [with the inhabitants of ... they become] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1304)**)

lest he become as a trap in your midst

People who tempt others to sin are spoken of as if they were a **trap.** If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent comparison or express this meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [lest those remaining people tempt you to sin] (See: **Simile (p.1449)**)

Verses 12–16 are the first of these ten commandments. The original language is structured such that every clause in these verses is subordinate to the initial, **Guard yourself**. That sort of structure may not be possible in your language (as it is not in English).

Exodus 34:13

Instead

This word marks a strong contrast with the previous verse. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a strong contrast. Alternate translation, followed by a new sentence: [Do the opposite!] (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.1313)**)

their altars you shall break down, and their pillars you shall smash, and his Asherah poles you shall cut down

This unusual word order reflects the original in bringing each item the Israelites must destroy into focus. You should use whatever form in your language would emphasize or focus on each item that they must destroy. Alternate translation, as separate sentences: [as for their altars, break them down! As for their stone pillars, smash them to pieces! As for their trees where they worship the goddess Asherah, cut them all down!] (See: **Information Structure (p.1380)**)

you shall cut down

For some reason only this pronoun is singular, referring back the singular “inhabitant” in the previous verse. Translate it based on your decision in the previous verse. (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1304)**)

Exodus 34:14

you shall not bow

To **bow to another god** means to worship it. This imagery is throughout scripture and should be retained in translation. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [you shall not bow to worship] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.1454)**)

for Yahweh—Jealous {is} his name—he {is} a jealous God

The repeated word **jealous** means that God is concerned to keep his honor. If his people worship other gods, he loses honor, because when his people do not honor him, other people also will not honor him. This is pictured in a metaphor of a jealous spouse who is concerned that his spouse be faithful to him. This is an important Biblical metaphor that should be kept in translation if at all possible. The UST makes this image explicit as a simile, which can be done occasionally but would probably be too long for repeated use in a translation. Alternate translation: [Yahweh jealously guards his reputation. He is a God jealous of his honor.] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

for Yahweh—Jealous {is} his name

Here, the word **name** represents God's character. Alternate translation: [Yahweh is always jealous] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 34:15

with the inhabitant of & and he invite & from his sacrifice

The word **inhabitant** is a singular noun that refers to any individual inhabitant or group of inhabitants from the peoples mentioned in the previous verse. The pronouns **he** and **his** are agreeing with that singular noun. If your language does not use singular nouns in that way, you can use a different expression. See how you translated this in 34:12. Alternate translation: [with the inhabitants of ... and they invite ... from their sacrifice] or [with the inhabitants of ... and one of them invites ... from his sacrifice] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.1304)**)

Lest you cut a covenant with the inhabitant of the land, and they prostitute after their gods and sacrifice to their gods, and he invite you

Connecting Statement:

Most of this verse is a sort of chain of logically consecutive hypothetical events that Yahweh is warning the Israelites against. Your language may have a specific way this sort of argument must be structured or phrased. One way to see this would be to repeat **lest** before every verb in verse 15–16. Alternate translation: [If you cut a covenant the inhabitant of the land, and if they then prostitute after their gods and sacrifice to their gods, and if he then invites you] (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.1375)**)

Lest you cut a covenant with the inhabitant of the land

Connecting Statement:

This phrase is exactly the same as the second clause of 34:12. It serves as a reminder of the command Yahweh is giving as he begins to expand on the “trap” he mentioned in verse 12. Your language may need to mark this repetition in a particular way. Alternate translation: [Remember: keep yourself lest you cut a covenant with the inhabitant of the land]

you cut a covenant

Connecting Statement:

See how you translated this in 34:12. Alternate translation: [you make a covenant] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

and they prostitute after their gods & to their gods

In this metaphor, Yahweh speaks of people worshiping other gods as if they were prostitutes going to other men. This metaphor is most often used regarding the unfaithfulness of the Israelites. The metaphor is not quite as clear with the other nations because while Yahweh is the only true God, he is not in special covenant with the other nations as their god. However, since the worship is still impurely following false gods, the metaphor is used here. This is an important Biblical metaphor that should be kept in translation if at all possible. Alternate translation: [and they worship their gods] or [because they worship their gods like prostitutes who go to other men] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

and they prostitute after their gods & to their gods

This phrase may also be seen as a metonymy because sexual sin was a regular part of worshiping false gods. Alternate translation: [and they worship by fornicating with their gods' cult prostitutes] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

and he invite you

Here, what the inhabitant will invite the Israelite to is not stated, but can be inferred from context. At the most basic level it is an invitation to eat food the Israelites were forbidden to eat. It is unclear how much more participation in worshiping false gods is implied. If your language requires that you specify what the Israelite is being invited into you may have to add some information. Alternate translation: [and he will invite you to eat from his sacrifice] or [and he will invite you to a feast to honor his gods] (See: **Ellipsis (p.1340)**)

and you eat from his sacrifice

The first part of the sin Yahweh is warning against in this and the next verse is to **eat from his sacrifice**. This clause is the result of disobedience regarding the **covenant** and the logical conclusion of the series of hypothetical events Yahweh presents before this. Alternate translation: [as a result, you will eat from his sacrifice] or [then you will eat from his sacrifice] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1320)**)

and you eat from his sacrifice

Here, **and you eat from his sacrifice** may represent any and all parts of the worship of the other nations' false gods. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and you feast to honor his gods] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1456)**)

and you eat from his sacrifice

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express the consequence of eating food that is sacrificed to another god explicitly. Alternate translation: [and you will eat some of his sacrifice and become guilty of worshiping his gods] or [and you will prostitute yourself to his god by eating some of his sacrifice] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 34:16

The string of hypothetical actions, each with its logical result continues throughout this verse. Continue translating the transitions between clauses as you decided in the previous verses. (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.1318)**)

and his daughters prostitute after their gods

In this metaphor, Yahweh speaks of people worshiping other gods as if they were prostitutes going to other men. This metaphor is most often used regarding the unfaithfulness of the Israelites. The metaphor is not quite as clear with the other nations because while Yahweh is the only true God, he is not in special covenant with the other nations as their god. However, since the worship is still impurely following false gods, the metaphor is used here. This is an important Biblical metaphor that should be kept in translation if at all possible. See how you translated it in the previous verse. Alternate translation: [and his daughters worship their gods] or [and his daughters worship their gods like prostitutes who go to other men] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

and cause your sons to prostitute after their gods

In this metaphor, Yahweh speaks of people worshiping other gods as if they were prostitutes going to other men. The metaphor is clear here since it is referring to Israelite men who should be Yahweh worshipers. This is an important Biblical metaphor that should be kept in translation if at all possible. Alternate translation: [and cause your sons to worship their gods] or [and cause your sons to worship their gods like prostitutes who go to other men] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

and cause your sons to prostitute after their gods

This is the climatic consequence of living in peace the nations God is driving out before them: complete apostacy from Yahweh and loss of the next generation to wickedness. Specifically it is the result of intermarriage with the pagans, which God has explicitly forbidden for this very reason. If your language marks the final consequence of a string of actions in a particular way it may be appropriate to use it here. Alternate translation: [and in the end, they will cause even your sons to prostitute after their gods] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p. 1320)**)

Exodus 34:17

The prohibition here is focused on making gods. In your translation make sure that the focus is not on the method, but the god-making.

molten metal

See how you translated **molten metal** in Exodus 32:4.

Exodus 34:18

This verse is almost identical to most of Exodus 23:15.

seven

Alternate translation: [7] (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

Aviv, & Aviv

This is the name of the first month of the Hebrew calendar. **Aviv** is during the last part of March and the first part of April on Western calendars. See how you translated **Aviv** in Exodus 13:4. You could convert the Hebrew day and month into an approximate date on the calendar that your culture uses. However, the Jews used a lunar calendar, so if you use a solar calendar, the date will be different every year and the translation will not be entirely accurate. So you may just want to give the number of the day and the name of the month on the Hebrew calendar, and say approximately what time of year that is on your calendar in a footnote. (See: **Hebrew Months (p.1364)**)

Exodus 34:19

This verse is similar to Exodus 13:12.

Exodus 34:20

This verse is very similar to Exodus 13:13.

with a lamb. & then you shall break his neck

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express explicitly that either the **lamb** or **donkey** must be killed, as in the UST. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

you do not ransom it

Alternate translation: [you do not ransom the donkey]

You shall ransom all the firstborn of your sons

Firstborn sons and firstborn donkeys belonged to Yahweh, but Yahweh did not want them sacrificed to Him. Instead, the Israelites were to sacrifice a lamb in their place. This allowed the Israelites to buy the donkeys and sons back from Yahweh.

And you shall not appear at my face empty-handed

Here understatement is used to emphasize that the Israelites must bring a suitable offering to Yahweh. This portion of the verse is identical to the end of Exodus 23:15. If this double negative would be misunderstood in your language, you could translate it as a positive statement. Alternate translation: [come to me without a proper offering] or [always bring an offering to me] (See: **Double Negatives (p.1335)**)

Exodus 34:21

This command is similar to that in Exodus 20:9.

but on the seventh day

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use cardinal numbers here. Alternate translation: [but on day seven] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1414)**)

In plowing time and in harvest time

Alternate translation: [Even when you are preparing the soil or gathering the crops]

Exodus 34:22

This verse is similar to Exodus 23:16, however the first festival is named **Festival of Weeks** here and “Festival of the Harvest” in 23:16.

and the Festival of the Gathering

This festival celebrated the final harvesting of all the crops for the year. This festival was also known as the Festival of Shelters or the Festival of Booths. The idea came from the practice of the farmers living in temporary booths, or huts, out in the fields to guard the crop as it ripened. See Deuteronomy 16:13. See how you translated this in Exodus 23:16. Alternate translation: [and the Festival of the Ingathering]

at the turning of the year

Like “the exiting of the year” in Exodus 23:16, this refers to the end of the year. Here, the year is pictured as something that can turn. Which, thinking of the planet, is highly astronomically accurate. (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 34:23

Except for **God of Israel** and dropping “to,” this verse is identical to Exodus 23:17.

shall appear before the face of the Lord

Here to **appear before the face of the Lord Yahweh** means to gather to worship. **Before the face** is a metonym for Yahweh’s presence, referring to worship. Alternate translation: [must come to worship the Lord] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 34:24

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 34:25

See the very similar Exodus 23:18.

the blood of my sacrifice

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express the fact that the blood is from an animal explicitly. Alternate translation: [the blood of an animal that you sacrifice to me] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 34:26

This verse is identical to Exodus 23:19.

Exodus 34:27

for over the mouth of these words

Alternate translation: [for in accordance with these words] or [for according to these words]

I have cut a covenant with you

See how you translated this in 34:12. (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Exodus 34:28

40 days and 40 nights

Alternate translation: [for 40 days, including the nights]

And he wrote

Here, **he** probably refers to Moses, based on Yahweh's command in the previous verse. However, Exodus 34:1 opens the possibility that Yahweh wrote. It is best to leave it ambiguous, but if you must specify, saying Moses is better. Alternate translation: [Moses wrote] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

the Ten Words

Here, the phrase **Ten Words** refers to the commandments that Yahweh gave by using words. The ULT capitalizes these words to show that they refer to these specific "words." If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language as modeled by the UST. (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 34:29

And it happened

This marks a change of scene which you should mark in a natural way in your language. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

And it happened, as Moses {was} descending from Mount Sinai, with the two tablets of the testimony in the hand of Moses as he {was} descending from the mountain

The statement about Moses' descent from the mountain is repeated almost verbatim, but does not refer to two events. If this would be misunderstood you may need to state it only once in translation as in the UST. Alternate translation: [Then Moses came down from Mount Sinai. As he was coming down from the mountain, he was carrying the two tablets of the testimony in his hands.] (See: **Information Structure (p.1380)**)

that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while speaking with him

In some languages it will make more sense to state that Moses' **face shone** before saying that he **did not know that** as in the UST. (See: **Information Structure (p.1380)**)

shone

Alternate translation: [became radiant]

Exodus 34:30

And they were afraid

They were afraid because of his bright face. Alternate translation: [because of that, they were afraid] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.1320)**)

Exodus 34:31

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 34:32

and he commanded them all that Yahweh had spoken with him

This means that Moses commanded the Israelites to obey everything Yahweh had commanded Moses to command the Israelites to do.

Exodus 34:33

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 34:34

This and the next verse give a general statement about Moses's practice for an unstated amount of time (it was probably from this point until his death as he continued to talk to Yahweh). You should mark this with a form in your language that is used for on-going action like **would** or the UST's "Whenever." (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.1307)**)

he had been commanded

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [Yahweh had commanded him] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 34:35

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 35

Exodus 35 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

- v. 1–3: reiteration of Sabbath command
- v. 4–9: list of materials for donation (See: Exodus 25:1–7)
- v. 10–19: things they need to make for the Dwelling complex
- v. 20–29: the people bring all the things listed
- v. 30–36:1: appointing of lead craftsmen to build these things

Translation Issues in This Chapter

- In the last chapter some repetition of Yahweh's instructions began, mostly around the covenant commands. Starting in this chapter and even more so in chapter 36, the commands regarding the construction of the Dwelling complex are repeated, often word for word, from chapters 25–31. In many verses the only difference will be a change of verb form from instruction to completion. As much as possible, these parallels will be pointed out for the translators with links to the previous verses. Translators should refer back to the previously translated verses for consistency and because notes in this section may not cover everything that was covered in the initial instruction section.
- Many items, materials, and processes for building the Dwelling may be unknown, but should have already been addressed in chapters 25–31.

Exodus 35:1

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 35:2

This verse is very similar to Exodus 31:15.

Six

Alternate translation: [6] (See: **Numbers (p.1409)**)

but on the seventh day

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use cardinal numbers here. Alternate translation: [but on day 7] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1414)**)

Six days shall work be done

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [Six days you shall work] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Every doer of work on it shall be put to death

If your language would not use passive here, you could state this in an active form. Alternate translation: [You must execute anyone who works on that day] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 35:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 35:4

And Moses said to all of the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, “This {is} the thing that Yahweh commanded, saying

Verses 5–19 are a second-level direct quotation. If it would be better to reduce the quotation level in your language, you may want to make this introductory comment (everything after the first **saying**) an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: [And Moses told all of the congregation of the sons of Israel the things that Yahweh commanded, saying,] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1333)**)

In verses 4–9, Moses tells the Israelites to collect the things Yahweh commanded him to collect in Exodus 25:2–7. You should check your translation for consistency between these passages.

Exodus 35:5

This verse is similar to Exodus 25:2–3.

Take from with you a contribution for Yahweh

Alternate translation: [Take up a collection for Yahweh from what you have]

every{one

Here, “from” is omitted but suggested by the sentence grammar. Also, **every** means “every person.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: [from every person] (See: **Ellipsis (p.1340)**)

every{one} willing of his heart

This is an idiom that indicates a person’s desire to give an offering. Many languages will have a similar idiom, though the body part often varies. Alternate translation: [from everyone who wants to give one] (See: **Idiom (p. 1378)**)

After this verse, a list begins. You may need to mark the end of this verse with punctuation or another way that your language marks the start of a list.

Exodus 35:6

This verse is identical to Exodus 25:4.

and blue and purple and worm of scarlet

This could mean: (1) “material that is dyed blue, purple, and scarlet,” probably wool yarn, or (2) “blue, purple and scarlet dye” to dye the linen. The original audience would have known what was meant. This material seems to have been used for embroidery later, so “yarn” or “thread” may be the best understanding. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

and worm of scarlet

A bright red color for dying cloth was extracted from these worms. Alternate translation: [and bright red] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 35:7

This verse is identical to Exodus 25:5.

reddened

When animal skins are tanned (processed into usable leather), they become reddish. It is not clear if these hides are dyed red or simply reddened in the tanning process. Alternate translation: [tanned] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

sea-cows

The meaning of this word is not known; it may refer to some water mammal that has skin that can be made into a high-quality leather. Sea cows on Wikipedia (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

acacias

A small tree with spreading foliage and durable wood. See on Wikipedia (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 35:8

Except for several uses of the word **and**, this verse is identical to Exodus 25:6.

and spices

Here, **spices** are made from parts of plants that people dry and then grind into a powder to put in oil or food, giving it a particular smell or flavor. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

Exodus 35:9

Except for an initial **and**, this verse is identical to Exodus 25:7.

and stones of onyx

An **onyx stone** is a valuable stone that has layers of white and black, red, or brown. If this stone is unknown to your people, consider translating it by using a word for a familiar stone with a similar pattern, if possible. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.1460)**)

and precious stones for

Alternate translation: [and valuable gems for] or [and treasured gems for]

Exodus 35:10

And all of the wise of heart

Here, **heart** and **spirit** are both referring to things innately possessed by a person, that is, traits of a person. The phrase essentially means “a talented craftsman.” If this is unclear to your readers you may consider making it more explicit. See how you translated this in Exodus 28:3. Alternate translation: [And every man with a skill] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

has commanded

Here, some the words that a sentence would need to be complete in some languages are left out. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context, as modeled in the UST. (See: **Ellipsis (p. 1340)**)

After this verse, a list begins. You may need to mark the end of this verse with punctuation or another way that your language marks the start of a list.

Exodus 35:11

its covering

See how you translated this in Exodus 26:14.

its clasps

The **clasps** fit into the loops to hold the curtains together. See how you translated these in Exodus 26:6.

its frames

See how you translated this in Exodus 26:15.

its bars

See how you translated this in Exodus 26:26.

its pillars

See how you translated this in 26:32.

its bases

These are heavy objects that rest on the ground and keep the object attached to them from moving. See how you translated this in Exodus 26:19.

Exodus 35:12

See how you translated these terms in 25:10–17 and 26:36.

Exodus 35:13

the bread of the faces

Here, **face** represents the presence of Yahweh. This bread represented the presence of God. Alternate translation: [the bread of the Presence] See how you translated this in Exodus 25:30. (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 35:14

See 25:31–37 for these items.

Exodus 35:15

the altar of incense & the oil of anointing & the incense of fragrance

For the **altar**, see 30:1. For the **oil**, see 30:25. For the **incense**, see 30:7.

Exodus 35:16

For the **grate**, see Exodus 27:4. Most of the rest of the verse is almost identical to 30:28.

Exodus 35:17

the curtains of & the curtain of

These were large curtains made of cloth. See how you translated this in Exodus 26:36.

its pillars

These were strong pieces of wood set upright and used as supports. See how you translated these in Exodus 27:10.

bases

These were blocks that had a slot in them to keep the board in place. See how you translated this in Exodus 26:19.

Exodus 35:18

the tent pegs of & the pegs of

These were sharp pieces of wood or metal used to secure the corners of a tent to the ground. See how you translated this in Exodus 27:19.

Exodus 35:19

finely-woven clothing

Except for **for serving in the Holy Place**, this verse is identical to 31:10.

Exodus 35:20

from before the face of Moses

Alternate translation: [from Moses] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 35:21

And every man whose heart lifted him came. And all whose spirit impelled him brought

These two phrases parallel each other and mean the same thing. It would be good to keep this poetic repetition in your translation unless it would be misunderstood. If repetition here would not highlight the joyful giving spirit of the Israelites in your language, you may need to combine the phrases. Alternate translation: [Everyone who was motivated, body and soul, came and gave] (See: **Parallelism (p.1417)**)

And every man whose heart lifted him came. And all whose spirit impelled him brought

Here, **heart** and **spirit** both refer to a person's will, their desire to do something. Many languages will have similar expressions, perhaps using different body and spirit words or concepts which you can use. If your language would not express a person's will in this way, you could translate the meaning. Alternate translation: [And every man whose will lifted him came, and all who felt impelled brought] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1456)**)

whose heart lifted him

Here, **heart lifted** is a metaphor for being willing or excited. Many languages will have similar expressions, perhaps using a different body part or a different action. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [who was excited] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

every man whose heart lifted him & And all whose spirit impelled him

Here, **man, whose,** and **him** all refer to men and women in a general way. This is made explicit in the next verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you may use terms that include men and women. (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1465)**)

and for the clothing of holiness

If your language does not use an abstract noun for this idea, you can express the idea behind the abstract noun **holiness** in another way. See how you translated this in 28:2. Alternate translation: [and for the holy clothing] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

Exodus 35:22

all impelled of heart

Here, **heart** refers to a person's will, their desire to do something. It is spoken of as causing a person to bring these gifts to Yahweh. This is a shortening and combining of the figure used in the previous verse: **heart** and **impelled** are brought together. See how you translated these ideas in the previous verse. Alternate translation: [anyone whose will impelled him] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1456)**)

all impelled of

Alternate translation: [who were impelled of]

brooches and earrings and rings and ornaments, all of the things of gold

These are different kinds of jewelry. The exact identity of each object is not known. The phrase **all of the things of gold** could either modify the whole list, meaning "all these items were made of gold," or could mean "many other gold things." If taken as a summary statement, in some languages it may be clearer to move it to the front of the list. Alternate translation: [all kinds of gold jewelry including necklaces, nose rings, signet rings, and gold ornaments] (See: **Litany (p.1393)**)

And every man

Although the term **men** is used, the word here is used in a generic sense that includes both men and women. Alternate translation: [And every person] (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1465)**)

Exodus 35:23

And every man with whom was found & brought {them

See how you translated many of these words in Exodus 25:4–5.

And every man with whom was found

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Also, the meaning of this phrase is simple possession. Alternate translation: [And every man who owned] or [And every man having] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

And every man

Here **man** includes both men and women. Alternate translation: [And every person] (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1465)**)

And every man

The phrase **every man** is used here without the restriction, “who was willing,” from previous verses. The exaggeration is used to emphasize what a large portion of the Israelites gave willingly. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language that expresses a large number or a majority. Alternate translation: [And very many people] (See: **Hyperbole (p.1371)**)

Exodus 35:24

and all with whom & was found

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Also, the meaning of this phrase is simple possession. Alternate translation: [and everyone who owned] or [and everyone having] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

All of the presenters {of

Here, **all** is limited by **presenters**, meaning only everyone who brought contributions. Avoid implying that every single Israelite did this (though very many did). Alternate translation: [All who decided to offer]

and all

The phrase **all** is used here without the restriction, “who were willing,” from previous verses. The exaggeration is used to emphasize what a large portion of the Israelites gave willingly. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language that expresses a large number or a majority. Alternate translation: [and very many people] (See: **Hyperbole (p.1371)**)

for all the work of the service

Here, **service** refers to worshiping Yahweh, and the phrase **work of the service** refers to building the Dwelling as a place for worshiping Yahweh. Alternate translation: [for any of the building of a place for worship] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 35:25

skilled of heart

Here, **heart** is referring to something innately possessed by a person, that is, a trait of a person. The phrase essentially means “a talented craftswoman.” If this is unclear to your readers you may consider making it more explicit. See how you translated a similar phrase in Exodus 28:3. Alternate translation: [who possessed the skill] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

the blue and the purple the worm of scarlet

This could mean: (1) “material that is dyed blue, purple, and scarlet,” probably wool yarn, or (2) “blue, purple and scarlet dye” to dye the linen. See how you translated a similar phrase in Exodus 25:4.

Exodus 35:26

whose hearts lifted them

Here, **heart** refers to a persons' will, their desire to do something. It is spoken of as causing a person to use her skills for Yahweh. This is the same as the first phrase in 35:21. Alternate translation: [whose wills impelled them] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1456)**)

Exodus 35:27

And the leaders brought & and for the breastpiece

Beginning with **onyx**, this verse is almost identical to Exodus 25:7.

Exodus 35:28

spice and the oil for light and for the oil of anointing and for the incense of fragrance

Exodus 25:6 has almost identical words, arranged slightly differently.

Exodus 35:29

The order of clauses in the ULT is reversed from the original because of required English sentence structure. In the original, **The sons of Israel brought a freewill offering to Yahweh** is at the end of the verse. Other languages may be able to retain the original order. (See: **Information Structure (p.1380)**)

whose heart impelled them

Here, **heart** refers to a persons' will, their desire to do something. It is spoken of as causing a person to bring these gifts to Yahweh. See how you translated this in 25:2 and 35:22. Alternate translation: [whose will impelled them] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1456)**)

which Yahweh had commanded {them} to do by the hand of Moses

Here, **by the hand of Moses** refers to Moses as a messenger for Yahweh's commands, not to Moses being the one who would build all these things. If this imagery of carrying a message would be misunderstood in your language, you may use another figure or translate the meaning. Alternate translation: [which Yahweh had told Moses to tell them to do] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 35:30

on Bezalel son of Uri son of Hur, from the tribe of Judah

What Moses says in this verse is a quote from Exodus 31:2

on Bezalel & of Uri & Hur

These are men's names. See 31:2. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

Exodus 35:31

And he has filled him & craftsmanship

This verse is a quote from Exodus 31:3

And he has filled him with the Spirit of God

Yahweh speaks of giving Bezalel his spirit as if Bezalel were a container and God's spirit were a liquid. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And he has given his spirit to Bezalel] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

with skill

If your language does not use an abstract noun for this idea, you can express the idea behind the abstract noun **skill** in another way. Alternate translation: [so he can work skillfully] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

and with understanding

If your language does not use an abstract noun for this idea, you can express the idea behind the abstract noun **understanding** in another way. Alternate translation: [and so he can understand his work] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

and with knowledge

If your language does not use an abstract noun for this idea, you can express the idea behind the abstract noun **knowledge** in another way. Alternate translation: [and so he knows his work well] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

and with all kinds of craftsmanship

If your language does not use an abstract noun for **craftsmanship**, you can express the idea behind the abstract noun in another way. Alternate translation: [and for making all kinds of crafts] or [and so that he can make all kinds of things] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

Exodus 35:32

and to design designs, & and in bronze

This verse is identical to Exodus 31:4, except for the first **and**.

Exodus 35:33

and in carving of precious stones for setting & craftsmanship of

This verse is identical to Exodus 31:5 except for the final **of invention**.

Exodus 35:34

And he has put {it} in his heart to teach

Here, **put in his heart** is an idiom referring to ability and desire. These are spoken of as if they are something that could be placed in a heart. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: [And he gave to them the ability and desire to teach] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

and Oholiab & Ahisamak

These are names of men. See how you translated these names in Exodus 31:6. (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 1367)**)

Exodus 35:35

This verse summarizes and pulls together many previously mentioned things. See 28:3 (**skill of heart**), 25:4 (for materials), 26:36 (**embroiderer**), 28:32 (**weaver**), 26:31 (**skillful workman**), 31:3 (**craftsman**), 28:6 (**designer of designs**).

He has filled them {with} skill of heart

Here, **skill** to create beautiful objects is spoken of as if it were something that could fill up a person. If your readers would not understand what this image means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [He has made them very skillful] (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

with} skill of heart

Here, **of heart** refers to possessing something, in this case ability or skill. Some languages will use a different body part for this image. Alternate translation: [with ability] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1456)**)

Exodus 36

Exodus 36 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

- v. 1: finish Moses' instruction
- v. 2–7: craftsmen collect materials from Moses, inform him the people should stop bringing things because they have too much already -v. 8–38: construction of the Dwelling, verse-by-verse quotations marked below
    - v. 8–18: quote Exodus 26:1–11
    - v. 19–34: quote Exodus 26:14–29
    - v. 35–36: quote 26:31–32
    - v. 37–38: quote 26:36–37

Translation Issues in This Chapter

- The first verse of this chapter goes with the last chapter.
- Most of this chapter exactly quotes chapter 26 with a shift from instruction to past narrative form on the verbs and a few other minor changes; some are Hebrew word order that will be invisible here. Be sure to consult your previous work for consistency.
- Throughout verses 8–38 the word **he** is used. This is a generic noun referring to any of the team of skilled craftsmen. You could also change it to "they" if that would be understood better in your language. (See: [[rc:*///ta/man/translate/figs-genericnoun]] and [[rc:*///ta/man/translate/figs-123person]])

Exodus 36:1

This verse is the end of a quotation from Moses that begin in 35:30. It should be connected as visually as possible to the previous verses, as the chapter break here is poorly placed.

Bezalel and Oholiab

Bezalel and Oholiab are the names of men. See how you translated this in Exodus 31:2 and 31:6 as well as in the end of chapter 35. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

man

We know from 35:25 that women were included in the skilled workers, so **man** means every person. Alternate translation: [person] (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.1465)**)

skilled of heart

Here, **of heart** refers to innately possessing something, in this case ability or skill. Some languages will use a different body part for this image. Alternate translation: [with innate ability] (See: **Synecdoche (p.1456)**)

skill

If your language does not use an abstract noun for this idea, you can express the idea behind the abstract noun **skill** in another way. See 35:31. Alternate translation: [the ability to work skillfully] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

and understanding

If your language does not use an abstract noun for this idea, you can express the idea behind the abstract noun **understanding** in another way. See 35:31. Alternate translation: [and so he can understand his work] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

the work of the service of the Holy Place

Here, **service** refers to worshiping Yahweh, and the phrase **work of the service** refers to building the Dwelling (**Holy Place**) where the Israelites would worship Yahweh. See 35:24. Alternate translation: [the building of the Holy Place for worship] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 36:2

to Bezalel and to Oholiab and to every man skilled of heart in whose heart Yahweh had put skill

See how you translated this in the previous verse.

skill

See how you translated **skill** in the previous verse. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

all whose heart lifted him

See how you translated this in 35:21. (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

Exodus 36:3

and they took

Alternate translation: [and the craftsmen took]

from before the face of

Here, **before the face** means with Moses. Moses had received and kept the building materials. Alternate translation: [from the custody of] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

in the morning in the morning

This is an idiom meaning every morning or every day. Use a similar expression or translate the meaning. Alternate translation: [morning by morning] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Exodus 36:4

the skilled

Here the adjective **skilled** is used as a noun in order to describe the group of craftsmen. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this with a noun phrase. Alternate translation: [the skilled workers] (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.1407)**)

every single man

Here, **every single man** translates an idiom that cannot be rendered literally and sensibly in English. The original is “a man a man.” If your language would use repetition to emphasize that each and every man came to see Moses, you could follow the original; otherwise use a phrase or structure that emphasizes that they all came. Alternate translation: [every man without exception] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

every single man

As previously, noted, there were some women who contributed (particularly in the cloth crafts) so this use of **man** may include women. Alternate translation: [every single worker] (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p. 1465)**)

Exodus 36:5

and they said to Moses, saying, “The people {are} bringing much more than enough for the service of the work that Yahweh has commanded {us} to do

If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: [The craftsmen told Moses that the people were bringing much more than enough for doing the work that Yahweh has commanded them to do] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1333)**)

Exodus 36:6

A man and a woman shall not make any more work for the contribution of the

If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: [that no one should bring any more contributions for the work of the Holy Place] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.1333)**)

and they caused a sound to pass through

Here, **sound** refers to the message. This means they spread Moses' message orally. Alternate translation: [everyone to share this message] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

A man and a woman shall not make

Here, **man and woman** is intended to mean everyone, or in this case because of the negation, no one. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [No one shall make] (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1360)**)

work

Here, **work** means the sorts of crafted items listed in the previous chapter.

from bringing

In some languages you may need to provide an object for this sentence. Alternate translation: [from bringing contributions] (See: **Ellipsis (p.1340)**)

Exodus 36:7

And the work

Here, **work** means the sorts of crafted items listed in the previous chapter.

Exodus 36:8

Except for tense and the addition of **every skilled of heart among the doers of the work,** this verse is identical to Exodus 26:1.

every skilled of heart

See how you translated this in 35:21. (See: **Synecdoche (p.1456)**)

he made

Throughout verses 8–38 the word **he** used. This is a generic noun referring to any of the team of skilled craftsmen. If this would be misunderstood in your language, use a more natural phrase. Alternate translation: [they made] or [a craftsman made] (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.1360)**)

Exodus 36:9

These verses are almost identical to Exodus 26:2–10. Tense is implied.

Exodus 36:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 36:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 36:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 36:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 36:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 36:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 36:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 36:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 36:18

This verse is similar to Exodus 26:11. The difference is the absence of the middle clause from 26:11.

Exodus 36:19

These verses are almost identical to Exodus 26:14–15.

Exodus 36:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 36:21

This verse is identical to Exodus 26:16.

Exodus 36:22

These verses are almost identical to Exodus 26:17–20.

Exodus 36:23

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 36:24

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 36:25

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 36:26

This verse is identical to Exodus 26:21.

Exodus 36:27

These verses are almost identical to Exodus 26:22–23.

Exodus 36:28

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 36:29

These verses are very similar to Exodus 26:24–25.

Exodus 36:30

two bases, two bases under one frame

The list formula from 26:25 is strangely shortened here but has the same meaning. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 36:31

These verses are almost identical to Exodus 26:26–27.

Exodus 36:32

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 36:33

This verse is very similar to Exodus 26:28.

Exodus 36:34

This verse is almost identical to Exodus 26:29.

Exodus 36:35

This verse is almost identical to Exodus 26:31.

Exodus 36:36

Aside from some verbal differences, this verse is very similar to Exodus 26:32.

Exodus 36:37

This verse is almost identical to Exodus 26:36.

Exodus 36:38

See how you translated many of these words in Exodus 26:37.

Exodus 37

Exodus 37 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

- v. 1–9 Making the ark, see Exodus 25:10–20
- v. 10–16 Making the table, see Exodus 25:23–29
- v. 17–24 Making the lampstand, see Exodus 25:31–39
- v. 25–28 Making the altar for incense, see Exodus 30:1–5
- v. 29 Making the oil and incense, see Exodus 30:22–38

Translation Issues in This Chapter

- This chapter continues the record of the construction of the Dwelling and the items for it in almost exact repetition of Yahweh's instructions. Be sure to consult your previous work for consistency.
- Throughout the chapter the word **he** is used. This is a generic noun referring to any of the team of skilled craftsmen. You could also change it to "they" if that would be understood better in your language. (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-genericnoun]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-123person]])

Exodus 37:1

This verse is almost identical to Exodus 25:10.

Exodus 37:2

This verse is very similar to Exodus 25:11.

Exodus 37:3

These verses are almost identical to Exodus 25:12–14.

Exodus 37:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 37:5

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 37:6

These verses are almost identical to Exodus 25:17–20.

Exodus 37:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 37:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 37:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 37:10

This verse is almost identical to Exodus 25:23–27.

Exodus 37:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 37:12

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 37:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 37:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 37:15

These verses are very similar to Exodus 25:28–29.

Exodus 37:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 37:17

This verse is almost identical to Exodus 25:31.

Exodus 37:18

These verses are identical to Exodus 25:32–34.

Exodus 37:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 37:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 37:21

These verses are almost identical to Exodus 25:35–36.

Exodus 37:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 37:23

This verse is almost identical with Exodus 25:37–38, excluding the purpose clause in v. 37 (“and it will hold up its lamps, and it will make light on the side of its face”).

Exodus 37:24

This verse is almost identical to Exodus 25:39.

Exodus 37:25

This verse is very similar to Exodus 30:1–2.

Exodus 37:26

This verse is almost identical to Exodus 30:3.

Exodus 37:27

This verse is very similar to Exodus 30:4.

Exodus 37:28

This verse is almost identical to Exodus 30:5.

Exodus 37:29

For the **oil**, see Exodus 30:25, and for the **incense** see 25:6 and 30:35.

Exodus 38

Exodus 38 General Notes

- This chapter continues the record of the construction of the Dwelling and the items for it in almost exact repetition of Yahweh's instructions. Be sure to consult your previous work for consistency. Verses 1–20 of this chapter follow Exodus 27:1–19 almost verse for verse.
- Throughout the chapter the word **he** is used. This is a generic noun referring to any of the team of skilled craftsmen. You could also change it to "they" if that would be understood better in your language. (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-genericnoun]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-123person]])

Exodus 38:1

This verse is very similar to Exodus 27:1.

Exodus 38:2

This verse is almost identical to Exodus 27:2.

Exodus 38:3

This verse is very similar to Exodus 27:3.

Exodus 38:4

This verse is very similar to Exodus 27:4 and Exodus 27:5. One part of 27:4 is rearranged into 38:5.

Exodus 38:5

This verse is very similar to the second half of Exodus 27:4.

Exodus 38:6

This verse is very similar to Exodus 27:6.

Exodus 38:7

This verse is very similar to Exodus 27:7 and the first part of 27:8.

Exodus 38:8

And he made a basin of bronze and its base of bronze

This portion is almost identical to Exodus 30:18.

with the mirrors of

The **bronze** came from the **mirrors.** If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: [from the bronze mirrors] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.1285)**)

Exodus 38:9

This verse is similar to Exodus 27:9.

Exodus 38:10

This verse is almost identical to Exodus 27:10.

Exodus 38:11

This verse is very similar to Exodus 27:11.

100 cubits

Here, “the curtains of the courtyard” and “long” are both omitted. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: [the curtains of the courtyard were 100 cubits long]
(See: **Ellipsis (p.1340)**)

Exodus 38:12

This verse is very similar to Exodus 27:12.

Exodus 38:13

This verse is almost identical to Exodus 27:13.

Exodus 38:14

This verse is almost identical to Exodus 27:14.

Exodus 38:15

This verse is very similar to Exodus 27:15.

Exodus 38:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 38:17

See how you translated many of these words in Exodus 27:17.

Exodus 38:18

See how you translated many of these words in Exodus 27:16 and 18.

And & was} twenty & was} five

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this in terms of modern measurements, either in the text or a footnote. A cubit is approximately 46cm. For your reference, a more precise conversion to metric is: 9.2m ... 2.3m (See: **Biblical Distance (p.1292)**)

and the height in width {was} five cubits

This probably refers to the general dimensions (20 cubits long by 5 cubits wide) but clarifies that the **width** would become the **height** of the curtain when the craftsmen or Levites set up the Dwelling. Alternate translation: [and the width, which corresponded to the height when hung, was five cubits]

Exodus 38:19

See how you translated many of these words in Exodus 27:17.

Exodus 38:20

This verse is very similar to the second half of Exodus 27:19.

Exodus 38:21

which was recorded

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [which the Levites recorded] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

according to the mouth of Moses

This is an idiom referring to Moses telling them to make these records. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: [following Moses' instructions] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

by the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest

Here, **by the hand of** could mean: (1) Ithamar was in charge of the group that recorded these records (2) Ithamar was the scribe who actually wrote these records. Alternate translation: [under the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron the priest] or [written down by Ithamar son of Aaron the priest] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Ithamar

Ithamar is the name of a man. See how you translated this name in Exodus 6:23. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

Exodus 38:22

And Bezalel son of Uri son of Hur

Bezalel, **Uri,** and **Hur** are the names of men. See how you translated these in Exodus 31:2. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

Moses

This sentence leaves 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. Alternate translation: [Moses to do] (See: **Ellipsis (p.1340)**)

Exodus 38:23

Oholiab son of Ahisamak

Oholiab and **Ahisamak** are names of men. See how you translated these in Exodus 31:6. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.1367)**)

an engraver and a designer and an embroiderer in blue and in purple and in scarlet and in fine linen

This is very similar to part of Exodus 35:35.

Exodus 38:24

All the gold used

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [All the gold that the craftsmen used] (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1280)**)

was} 29 talents and 730 shekels, by the shekel of the sanctuary

A talent is about 34 kilograms, and a shekel is about 11 grams. There were evidently shekels of more than one weight at the time; **by the shekel of the sanctuary** specified which one was to be used. See how you translated this in Exodus 30:13. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this in terms of modern measurements, either in the text or a footnote. (See: **Biblical Weight (p.1300)**)

Exodus 38:25

was} 100 talents and 1, 775 shekels, by the shekel of the sanctuary

A talent is about 34 kilograms, and a shekel is about 11 grams. There were evidently shekels of more than one weight at the time, **by the shekel of the sanctuary** specified which one was to be used. See the previous verse. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this in terms of modern measurements, either in the text or a footnote. (See: **Biblical Weight (p.1300)**)

Exodus 38:26

See how you translated many of the same things in Exodus 30:13–14.

a beka for a head (half a shekel), by the shekel of & sanctuary

A beka is 1/2 a shekel. A shekel is 11 grams. There were evidently shekels of more than one weight at the time; **by the shekel of the sanctuary** specified which one was to be used. See 38:24. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this in terms of modern measurements, either in the text or a footnote. Alternate translation: [five and a half grams] or [5 1/2 grams] (See: **Biblical Weight (p.1300)**)

half a shekel), by & shekel of

A **half** means one part out of two equal parts. (See: **Fractions (p.1358)**)

the & from every passer over to the counted ones from a son of 20 years and older—from 603, 550

Here the account leaves out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. The idea that this silver was “received” **from** these “men” is left out. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: [received from every passer over to the counted ones from a son of 20 years and older—received from 603,550 men] (See: **Ellipsis (p.1340)**)

from a son of 20 years

This is an idiom meaning 20 years old. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: [from those 20 years old] (See: **Idiom (p.1378)**)

Exodus 38:27

100 talents of

A talent is about 34 kilograms. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this in terms of modern measurements, either in the text or a footnote. (See: **Biblical Weight (p.1300)**)

Exodus 38:28

the 1, 775

Here the words **shekels of silver** have been omitted because they are understood from 38:25. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: [the 1,775 shekels of silver] (See: **Ellipsis (p.1340)**)

See how you translated some of these in Exodus 27:17.

Exodus 38:29

was} 70 talents and 2, 400 shekels

A talent is about 34 kilograms, and a shekel is about 11 grams. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this in terms of modern measurements, either in the text or a footnote. (See: **Biblical Weight (p.1300)**)

Exodus 38:30

grate of

A **grate** is a frame of crossed bars for holding wood when burning. See how you translated this in Exodus 27:4.

Exodus 38:31

the tent pegs of & the tent pegs of

These are sharp bronze stakes that were used to secure the corners of a tent to the ground. See how you translated this in Exodus 27:19.

Exodus 39

Exodus 39 General Notes

- This chapter continues the record of the construction in almost exact repetition of Yahweh's instructions. The special, holy clothing mentioned in previous chapters is produced to the correct specifications in this chapter. (See: **holy, holiness, unholy, sacred (p.1478)**) Be sure to consult your previous work to maintain consistency. Verses 1–31 of this chapter follow Exodus 28:1–37 with some differences. Verses 33–41 follow 35:10–19.
- Throughout the chapter the people making the items are referred to interchangeably as **he** or **they**. Both are generic nouns referring to any of the team of skilled craftsmen. You could change all instances to "they" or "he" if that would be understood better in your language. (See: [[rc:*///ta/man/translate/figs-genericnoun]] and [[rc:*///ta/man/translate/figs-123person]])

Exodus 39:1

See how you translated similar instructions in Exodus 28:4–5.

the clothes of holiness

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **holiness**, you can express the same idea in another way. See how you translated this in 28:2. Alternate translation: [the holy clothes] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.1278)**)

Exodus 39:2

This verse is almost identical to Exodus 28:6.

Exodus 39:3

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 39:4

This verse is very similar to 28:7.

Exodus 39:5

This verse is almost identical to Exodus 28:8.

Exodus 39:6

See how you translated many of these words in Exodus 28:9 and especially Exodus 28:11. Here, as there, the **sons of Israel** literally means the twelve sons, Rueben through Benjamin, not the Israelite nation.

Exodus 39:7

This verse is almost identical to the first half of Exodus 28:12.

Exodus 39:8

This verse is almost identical to Exodus 28:15; a few words are omitted here.

Exodus 39:9

This verse is almost identical to Exodus 28:16; a few words are added or repeated here.

Exodus 39:10

This verse is almost identical to Exodus 28:17.

Exodus 39:11

an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond

This verse is identical to Exodus 28:18.

Exodus 39:12

a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst

This verse is identical to Exodus 28:19.

Exodus 39:13

a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper

This verse is almost identical to Exodus 28:20.

Exodus 39:14

This verse is almost identical to Exodus 28:21.

Exodus 39:15

This verse is almost identical to Exodus 28:22.

Exodus 39:16

This verse is very similar to Exodus 28:23–24.

Exodus 39:17

This verse is almost identical to Exodus 28:24.

Exodus 39:18

This verse is identical to Exodus 28:25 except for verb tense.

Exodus 39:19

This verse is identical to Exodus 28:26 except for verb tense.

Exodus 39:20

This verse is identical to Exodus 28:27 except for verb tense.

Exodus 39:21

This verse is almost identical to Exodus 28:28 except for the note about Yahweh's command.

Exodus 39:22

This verse is almost identical to most of Exodus 28:31–32.

Exodus 39:23

This verse is very similar to Exodus 28:32.

Exodus 39:24

This verse is similar to part of Exodus 28:33.

Exodus 39:25

This verse is similar to parts of Exodus 28:33.

Exodus 39:26

The first part of this verse is almost identical to the first part of Exodus 28:34.

Exodus 39:27

Verses 27–29 reflect Exodus 28:39, 40, and 42 but in a different order.

Exodus 39:28

Verses 27–29 reflect Exodus 28:39, 40, and 42 but in a different order.

Exodus 39:29

Verses 27–29 reflect Exodus 28:39, 40, and 42 but in a different order.

Exodus 39:30

This verse is almost identical Exodus 28:36. See 29:6 for the **crown of holiness**.

Exodus 39:31

This verse is very similar to Exodus 28:37.

Exodus 39:32

This verse marks the end of the narrative of the construction of the Dwelling. More precisely, it seems to mark the beginning of an ending section. Use the natural form in your language for expressing the conclusion of a story. (See: **End of Story (p.1343)**)

the Dwelling, the tent of meeting

The **tabernacle** and **tent of meeting** are the same thing. The two interchangeable terms are brought together here in a poetic doubling to bring this part of the narrative to a close. If your readers would find this confusing you may need to simplify to one or expand in explanation like in the UST. Alternate translation: [holy meeting tent] (See: **Doublet (p.1338)**)

And the sons of Israel did according to all that Yahweh had commanded Moses; thus they did

Here, **thus they did** parallels the whole rest of the sentence. Like the doubling of the terms for **tabernacle** this brings the narrative of building to an emphatic conclusion. If this sort of parallelism would convey a meaning other than this emphatic conclusion in your language you may need to use another natural way to close the narrative with emphasis on the Israelites complete obedience. Alternate translation: [And the sons of Israel faithfully did exactly according to all that Yahweh had commanded Moses] (See: **Parallelism (p.1417)**)

And all the service of the Dwelling, the tent of meeting, was finished. And the sons of Israel did according to all that Yahweh had commanded Moses; thus they did

This verse starts a short narrative of the Israelites bringing and presenting the items for the Dwelling to Moses for inspection. It is a summary of the construction and extended conclusion to the last few chapters. Your team may need to decide how to group verse 32, as it both closes the construction narrative and introduces this next section, which ends with a very similar summary statement in 39:42–43. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

Exodus 39:33

This verse, especially the list of items, is very similar to 35:11.

Exodus 39:34

and the covering of reddened hides of rams and the covering of hides of sea-cows

See how you translated similar phrases to this in Exodus 26:14.

the curtain of covering

See how you translated similar phrases to this in 35:12.

Exodus 39:35

See how you translated similar phrases to this in 35:12.

Exodus 39:36

This verse is almost identical to 35:13.

Exodus 39:37

These verses are very similar to 35:14–15.

Exodus 39:38

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 39:39

This verse is almost identical with 35:16.

Exodus 39:40

This verse is almost identical with 35:17 and parts of 35:18.

the Dwelling for the tent of meeting

These refer to the same place. See how you translated the doubling in 39:32. Alternate translation: [the Dwelling, that is the tent of meeting] (See: **Doublet (p.1338)**)

the Dwelling for the tent of meeting

This verse is identical to 35:19.

Exodus 39:41

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 39:42

This verse is almost identical to the second half of 39:32.

Exodus 39:43

and behold

Here, the word **behold** draws attention to the information that follows. Use a word or marking in your language that draws attention to the next information.

Just as Yahweh had commanded, thus they had done

This (and really verse 42) is the end of the conclusion of the construction of materials portion of the story. The ending began in 39:32. If your language has specific features that should be part of the end of a section like this, consider using them here. (See: **End of Story (p.1343)**)

Exodus 40

Exodus 40 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

- In this chapter, **just as Yahweh commanded Moses** is repeated seven times, as in the previous chapter, to show that Moses was obedient to every detail of Yahweh's command.
- This chapter is repetitive both internally and with other parts of the book. Verses 17–33 parallel verses 2–8 in an expanded way.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

- The **Dwelling** and **tent of meeting** are the same thing, but both appear next to each other many times in this chapter. The two interchangeable terms are brought together throughout this chapter in a poetic doubling to bring book to a close. If your readers would find this confusing, you may need to simplify to one or expand in explanation like in the UST.
- This chapter says that Moses did all these things. Just like with Bezalel in earlier chapters, it would have been impossible for him to do all this personally. The people helped him set up the Dwelling. In many translations this will more clear if you make this explicit.
- "the glory of Yahweh filled the Dwelling": This phrase indicates that Yahweh began to dwell within the Dwelling, among Israel, in a special way. (See: [[rc:*///tw/dict/bible/kt/glory]] and [[rc:*///tw/dict/bible/kt/tabernacle]])

Exodus 40:1

There is a transition to a new event at the beginning of this chapter. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

Exodus 40:2

On the first day of the month, in the first month

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use cardinal numbers here. Alternate translation: [On day one of the month, in month one] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1414)**)

the Dwelling of the tent of meeting

These refer to the same place. See how you translated the doubling in 39:32. Alternate translation: [the Dwelling, that is the tent of meeting] (See: **Doublet (p.1338)**)

month

Here, the new or next year is omitted because it can be inferred from context. However, if that would be misunderstood by your readers (perhaps they would think it just meant “next month” or something), you could add a phrase to make it clear that it is the first month of the year. This refers to exactly one year after God rescued his people from Egypt. See Exodus 12:2. Alternate translation: [month of the year] (See: **Ellipsis (p.1340)**)

Exodus 40:3

and you shall cover over

Alternate translation: [and you shall conceal]

Exodus 40:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 40:5

before the face of

Alternate translation: [in front of] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 40:6

before the face of

Alternate translation: [in front of] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

the Dwelling, the tent of meeting

These refer to the same place. See how you translated the doubling in 39:32. Alternate translation: [the Dwelling, that is the tent of meeting] (See: **Doublet (p.1338)**)

Exodus 40:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 40:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 40:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 40:10

a holiest holy thing

Here, **holiest holy** means extremely or uniquely holy. If this form would not express that this item would become uniquely holy in your language you may need to find another way to express this idea. See how you translated this in Exodus 29:37. Alternate translation: [a most holy thing] or [extraordinarily holy] (See: **Possession (p.1425)**)

Exodus 40:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 40:12

Verses 12–15 are similar to Exodus 29:4–9.

Exodus 40:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 40:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 40:15

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 40:16

This statement starts a new section in which Moses does all the things **just as Yahweh had commanded**; this poetic obedience statement was seen so often in the previous chapter. You may wish to mark this transition and poetic statement in a particular way in your language that is similar to how you did in the last chapter. See 39:32. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.1382)**)

Exodus 40:17

that} the Dwelling was raised up

The use of the passive here indicates that the important thing is the completion of the task of setting up the tent on the specific date Yahweh had commanded. If your language would show that focus in a different way, use a natural form to do that. Alternate translation: [that they set up the Dwelling] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

in the first month, the second year, on the first of the month

This refers to exactly one year after God rescued his people from Egypt. See Exodus 12:2.

in the first month, the second year, on the first of

If your language does not use ordinal numbers, you can use cardinal numbers here. Alternate translation: [in month one, year two, on day one of] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.1414)**)

Exodus 40:18

And Moses raised up the Dwelling and placed its bases

Moses was the leader. It would have been impossible for him to do all this personally; the people helped him set up the Dwelling. All references to Moses from here to all the Dwelling assembly listing through 40:33 can be understood this way. Alternate translation: [And Moses directed the people to raise up the Dwelling, and they placed its bases] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 40:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 40:20

And he took & And he put

In this verse and the next, there may be an exception to the word **he** meaning someone who was helping Moses, because these items were especially sacred. If you have been using a form that indicates that people are helping Moses construct the Dwelling, you may consider switching to “Moses” here. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

Exodus 40:21

And he brought & And he set up

In this verse and the previous verse, there may be an exception to the word **he** meaning someone who was helping Moses, because these items were especially sacred. If you have been using a form that indicates that people are helping Moses construct the Dwelling, you may consider switching to “Moses” here. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.1431)**)

Exodus 40:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 40:23

before the face of

Alternate translation: [in the presence of] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 40:24

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 40:25

before the face of

Alternate translation: [in the presence of] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 40:26

in front of the face of

Alternate translation: [in front of] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

Exodus 40:27

See 30:7.

Exodus 40:28

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 40:29

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 40:30

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 40:31

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 40:32

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 40:33

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 40:34

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Exodus 40:35

And Moses was not able to go into the tent of meeting, because the cloud had settled on it and the glory of Yahweh had filled the Dwelling

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: [Because the cloud had settled on it and the glory of Yahweh had filled the Dwelling, Moses was not able to go into the tent of meeting.]

Exodus 40:36

And whenever the cloud was taken up

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [Whenever Yahweh's cloud moved] (See: **Active or Passive (p. 1280)**)

Exodus 40:37

but if the cloud was not taken up, then they would not set out until the day it was taken up

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [but if Yahweh did not take up the cloud, then they would not set out until the day he took it up.] (See: **Active or Passive (p.1280)**)

Exodus 40:38

before the eyes of all the house of Israel

Here, **before the eyes of** refers to being able to see. All the Israelites could see the cloud and fire. Alternate translation: [and all the house of Israel could see it] (See: **Metonymy (p.1405)**)

the house of Israel

Here, **house** represents a people group, the Israelites, who were descended from Jacob, who was also named Israel. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a metaphor from your language or translate the meaning. This is a common biblical metaphor, so you may want to check other places this occurs. The **house of Israel** is equivalent to “sons of Israel” or “Israelites.” (See: **Metaphor (p.1399)**)

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Version 86

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: Exodus 1:7; Exodus 1:12; Exodus 1:13; Exodus 1:14; Exodus 2:4; Exodus 3:3; Exodus 3:7; Exodus 3:9; Exodus 3:17; Exodus 3:20; Exodus 8:23; Exodus 12:12; Exodus 12:13; Exodus 12:16; Exodus 14:13; Exodus 15:7; Exodus 15:11; Exodus 15:13; Exodus 16:23; Exodus 20:4; Exodus 20:6; Exodus 22:31; Exodus 23:1; Exodus 28:2; Exodus 28:4; Exodus 29:6; Exodus 29:29; Exodus 30:25; Exodus 30:31; Exodus 31:3; Exodus 32:30; Exodus 32:31; Exodus 33:12; Exodus 33:18; Exodus 33:19; Exodus 33:22; Exodus 34:6; Exodus 34:7; Exodus 35:21; Exodus 35:31; Exodus 36:1; Exodus 36:2; Exodus 39:1

Active or Passive

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)

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.

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: Exodus 1:7; Exodus 3:16; Exodus 4 Chapter Introduction; Exodus 5:14; Exodus 5:16; Exodus 5:18; Exodus 6:3; Exodus 8:24; Exodus 10:7; Exodus 10:8; Exodus 10:26; Exodus 12:13; Exodus 12:15; Exodus 12:16; Exodus 12:19; Exodus 12:34; Exodus 12:39; Exodus 12:46; Exodus 12:48; Exodus 13:3; Exodus 13:7; Exodus 14:4; Exodus 14:5; Exodus 14:17; Exodus 14:18; Exodus 14:21; Exodus 15:8; Exodus 15:9; Exodus 19:12; Exodus 19:13; Exodus 20:24; Exodus 20:26; Exodus 21 Chapter Introduction; Exodus 21:8; Exodus 21:12; Exodus 21:15; Exodus 21:16; Exodus 21:17; Exodus 21:20; Exodus 21:22; Exodus 21:28; Exodus 21:29; Exodus 21:30; Exodus 21:32; Exodus 21:36; Exodus 22 Chapter Introduction; Exodus 22:2; Exodus 22:3; Exodus 22:4; Exodus 22:6; Exodus 22:7; Exodus 22:8; Exodus 22:10; Exodus 22:11; Exodus 22:12; Exodus 22:13; Exodus 22:14; Exodus 22:15; Exodus 22:19; Exodus 22:20; Exodus 23:12; Exodus 23:13; Exodus 23:21; Exodus 25:15; Exodus 25:28; Exodus 25:29; Exodus 25:31; Exodus 25:40; Exodus 26:3; Exodus 26:30; Exodus 27:7; Exodus 27:17; Exodus 28:7; Exodus 28:20; Exodus 28:28; Exodus 28:32; Exodus 28:35; Exodus 29:2; Exodus 29:34; Exodus 29:43; Exodus 30:32; Exodus 31:14; Exodus 31:15; Exodus 31:17; Exodus 31:18; Exodus 32:15; Exodus 33:12; Exodus 33:16; Exodus 33:23; Exodus 34:34; Exodus 35:2; Exodus 35:23; Exodus 35:24; Exodus 38:21; Exodus 38:24; Exodus 40:17; Exodus 40:36; Exodus 40:37

Aside

Description

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

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

Figures of Speech (UTA PDF)

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Many languages do not use asides, and readers could be confused by them. They may wonder why the speaker suddenly starts talking to himself or someone else about the people he is speaking with.

Examples From the Bible

> All the men of your covenant are sending you away as far as the border. The men of your peace are deceiving you and are prevailing against you. They of your bread will set a trap under you. **There is no understanding in him.** (Obadiah 1:7 ULT)

In the first three lines, Yahweh is telling the people of Edom what will happen to them because they did not help the people of Judah. In the fourth line, Yahweh says something about Edom to himself.

> And I purified them from everything foreign. And I caused the service watches to stand: for the priests and for the Levites, a man in his work; and for the offering of pieces of wood at the appointed times; and for the firstfruits. **Remember me, my God, for good.** (Nehemiah 13:30-31 ULT)

Nehemiah is speaking to the readers of his account and describing some of the many things he did to restore true worship in Judah after the people returned from exile. But he suddenly turns aside and addresses God, asking God to bless him for what he, Nehemiah, has done for those people.

Translation Strategies

(1) If an aside would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. But if this way of speaking would be confusing, let the speaker continue speaking to the people who are listening to him, but make clear that he is now expressing his thoughts and feelings about them.
(2) If a person speaks a prayer to God as an aside, you can put the prayer in quotation marks to indicate that.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1)

> All the men of your covenant are sending you away as far as the border. The men of your peace are deceiving you and are prevailing against you. They of your bread will set a trap under you. **There is no understanding in him.** (Obadiah 1:7 ULT)

All the men of your covenant are sending you away as far as the border. The men of your peace are deceiving you and are prevailing against you. They of your bread will set a trap under you. **You do not understand any of this.**

(2)

> And I purified them from everything foreign. And I caused the service watches to stand: for the priests and for the Levites, a man in his work; 31 and for the offering of pieces of wood at the appointed times; and for the firstfruits. **Remember me, my God, for good.** (Nehemiah 13:30-31 ULT)

And I cleansed them from everything foreign, and I made assignments for the priests and for the Levites, a man to his own work. And the wood offering at the stated time, and the firstfruits. **“Remember me, my God, for good.”**

"

Referenced in: Exodus 2:14; Exodus 5:5; Exodus 11:3

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)

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Referenced in: Exodus 1:22; Exodus 2:3; Exodus 2:9; Exodus 2:12; Exodus 3:7; Exodus 4:17; Exodus 4:20; Exodus 7:20; Exodus 8:6; Exodus 8:8; Exodus 8:24; Exodus 9:6; Exodus 9:19; Exodus 9:20; Exodus 10:6; Exodus 10:17; Exodus 10:28; Exodus 11:8; Exodus 12:4; Exodus 12:11; Exodus 12:27; Exodus 12:33; Exodus 13:13; Exodus 14 Chapter Introduction; Exodus 14:4; Exodus 15:1; Exodus 15:14; Exodus 15:17; Exodus 15:21; Exodus 16:8; Exodus 18:2; Exodus 18:11; Exodus 18:14; Exodus 18:25; Exodus 19:8; Exodus 20:26; Exodus 21:3; Exodus 21:13; Exodus 21:19; Exodus 21:21; Exodus 21:23; Exodus 21:24; Exodus 21:29; Exodus 21:30; Exodus 21:32; Exodus 21:34; Exodus 21:36; Exodus 22:15; Exodus 22:21; Exodus 23:11; Exodus 23:24; Exodus 23:29; Exodus 24:1; Exodus 24:8; Exodus 24:9; Exodus 24:12; Exodus 25:4; Exodus 25:40; Exodus 26:19; Exodus 26:21; Exodus 26:25; Exodus 27:5; Exodus 28:25; Exodus 28:35; Exodus 29:9; Exodus 29:20; Exodus 29:21; Exodus 29:31; Exodus 29:40; Exodus 30:20; Exodus 32 General Notes; Exodus 32:5; Exodus 32:18; Exodus 32:29; Exodus 32:32; Exodus 32:35; Exodus 33:5; Exodus 33:6;

Exodus 33:9; Exodus 33:14; Exodus 34:7; Exodus 34:15; Exodus 34:20; Exodus 34:25; Exodus 35:6; Exodus 36:30; Exodus 38:8

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)

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Referenced in: Exodus 1:1; Exodus 1:20; Exodus 2:16; Exodus 2:23; Exodus 3:1; Exodus 6:14; Exodus 7:7; Exodus 9:31; Exodus 13:17; Exodus 16:34

Biblical Distance

Description

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the lengths and distances that are in the Bible?*

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

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-decimal]]
Fractions (UTA PDF)

The following terms are the most common measures for distance or length that were originally used in the Bible. Most of these are based on the sizes of the hand and forearm.

- The **handbreadth** was the width of the palm of a man's hand.
- The **span** or handspan was the width of a man's hand with the fingers spread out.
- The **cubit** was the length of a man's forearm, from the elbow to the tip of the longest finger.
- The **"long" cubit** is used only in Ezekiel 40-48. It is the length of a normal cubit plus a span.
- The **stadium** (plural, **stadia**) referred to a certain footrace that was about 185 meters in length. Some older English versions translated this word as "furlong," which referred to the average length of a plowed field.

The metric values in the table below are close but not exactly equal to the biblical measures. The biblical measures probably differed in exact length from time to time and place to place. The equivalents below are an attempt to give an average measurement.

Original Measure	Metric Measure
handbreadth	8 centimeters
span	23 centimeters
cubit	46 centimeters
"long" cubit	54 centimeters
stadia	185 meters

Translation Principles

The people in the Bible did not use modern measures such as meters, liters, and kilograms. Using the original measures can help readers know that the Bible really was written long ago in a time when people used those measures.
Using modern measures can help readers understand the text more easily.
Whatever measure you use, it would be good, if possible, to tell about the other kind of measure in the text or a footnote.
If you do not use the Biblical measures, try not to give the readers the idea that the measurements are exact. For example, if you translate one cubit as ".46 meters" or even as "46 centimeters," readers might think that the measurement is exact. It would be better to say "half a meter," "45 centimeters," or "50 centimeters."
Sometimes it can be helpful to use the word "about" to show that a measurement is not exact. For example, Luke 24:13 says that Emmaus was 60 stadia from Jerusalem. This can be translated as "about ten kilometers" from Jerusalem.
When God tells people how long something should be, and when people make things according to those lengths, do not use "about" in the translation. Otherwise it will give the impression that God did not care exactly how long something should be.

Translation Strategies

(1) Use the measurements from the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See Copy or Borrow Words.)
(2) Use the metric measurements given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.
(3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.
(4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note.
(5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note.

Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Exodus 25:10 below.

> They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be two and a half cubits; its width will be one cubit and a half; and its height will be one cubit and a half. (Exodus 25:10 ULT)

(1) Use the measurements given in the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See Copy or Borrow Words.)

> "They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **two and a half kubits**; its width will be **one kubit and a half**; and its height will be **one kubit and a half**."

(2) Use the metric measurements given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.

> "They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**."

(3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement. For example, if you measure things using the standard meter length, you could translate it as below.

> "They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**."

(4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note. The following shows both measurements in the text.

> "They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **two and a half cubits (one meter)**; its width will be **one cubit and a half (two thirds of a meter)**; and its height will be **one cubit and a half (two thirds of a meter)**."

(5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note. The following shows the ULT measurements in notes.

> "They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; [1] its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; [2] and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**."

The footnotes would look like:

> “They are to make an ark of acacia wood. Its length must be **one meter**; [1] its width will be **two thirds of a meter**; [2] and its height will be **two thirds of a meter**.”

The footnotes would look like:

> [1] two and a half cubits [2] one cubit and a half

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Referenced in: Exodus 25:10; Exodus 25:17; Exodus 25:23; Exodus 25:25; Exodus 26:2; Exodus 26:8; Exodus 26:13; Exodus 26:16; Exodus 27:1; Exodus 27:9; Exodus 27:11; Exodus 27:12; Exodus 27:13; Exodus 27:14; Exodus 27:15; Exodus 27:16; Exodus 27:18; Exodus 28:16; Exodus 30:2; Exodus 38:18

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: Exodus 21:32; Exodus 30:13; Exodus 30:15

Biblical Volume

Description

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the measures of volume that are in the Bible?*

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

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-decimal]]

The following terms are the most common units of volume used in the Bible to state how much a certain container could hold. The containers and measurements are given for both liquids (such as wine) and dry solids (such as grain). The metric values are not exactly equal to the biblical measures. The biblical measures probably differed in exact amount from time to time and place to place. The equivalents below are an attempt to give an average measurement.

Type	Original Measure	Liters
Dry	omer	2 liters
Dry	ephah	22 liters
Dry	homer	220 liters
Dry	cor	220 liters
Dry	seah	7.7 liters
Dry	lethek	114.8 liters
Liquid	metrete	40 liters
Liquid	bath	22 liters
Liquid	hin	3.7 liters
Liquid	kab	1.23 liters
Liquid	log	0.31 liters

Translation Principles

- The people in the Bible did not use modern measures such as meters, liters, and kilograms. Using the original measures can help readers know that the Bible really was written long ago in a time when people used those measures.
- Using modern measures can help readers understand the text more easily.
- Whatever measures you use, it would be good, if possible, to tell about the other kinds of measures in the text or a footnote.
- If you do not use the biblical measures, try not to give the readers the idea that the measurements are exact. For example, if you translate one hin as “3.7 liters,” readers might think that the measurement is exactly 3.7 liters, not 3.6 or 3.8. It would be better to use a more approximate measure such as “three and a half liters” or “four liters.”
- When God tells people how much of something to use, and when people use those amounts in obedience to him, do not say “about” in the translation. Otherwise it will give the impression that God did not care exactly how much they used.

When the unit of measure is stated

Translation Strategies

(1) Use the measurements from the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See Copy or Borrow Words.)
(2) Use the metric measurements given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.
(3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.
(4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note.
(5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note.

Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Isaiah 5:10 below.

> For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only one bath, and one homer of seed will yield only an ephah. (Isaiah 5:10 ULT)

(1) Use the measurements from the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See Copy or Borrow Words.)

> > “For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only one **bat**, and one **homer** of seed will yield only an **efa**.”

(2) Use the measurements given in the UST. Usually they are metric measurements. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.

> > “For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **22 liters** and **220 liters** of seed will yield only **22 liters**.”
>
> > “For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **22**, and **ten baskets** of seed will yield only **one basket**.”

(3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

> > “For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **six gallons**, and **six and a half bushels** of seed will yield only **20 quarts**.”

(4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note. The following shows both measurements in the text.

> > “For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **one bath (six gallons)**, and **one homer (six and a half bushels)** of seed will yield only **an ephah (20 quarts)**.”

(5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note. The following shows the ULT measurements in footnotes.

> > “For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only 22 liters[1], and 220 liters[2] of seed will yield only 22 liters[3].”

The footnotes would look like:

> > [1] one bath [2] one homer [3] one ephah

When the unit of measure is implied

Sometimes the Hebrew does not specify a particular unit of volume but only uses a number. In these cases, many English versions, including the ULT and UST, add the word “measure.”

> When you came to a heap of **20 measures** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50 measures** of wine, there were only 20. (Haggai 2:16 ULT)

Translation Strategies

(1) Translate literally by using the number without a unit.
(2) Use a generic word like “measure” or “quantity” or “amount.”
(3) Use the name of an appropriate container, such as “basket” for grain or “jar” for wine.
(4) Use a unit of measure that you are already using in your translation.

Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Haggai 2:16 below.

> When you came to a heap of **20 measures** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **fifty measures** of wine, there were only **20**. (Haggai 2:16 ULT)

(1) Translate literally by using the number without a unit.

> > When you came to a heap of **20** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50** of wine, there were only **20**.

(2) Use a generic word like “measure” or “quantity” or “amount.”

> > When you came to a heap of **20 amounts** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **fifty amounts** of wine, there were only **20**.

(3) Use the name of an appropriate container, such as “basket” for grain or “jar” for wine.

> > When you came to a heap of **20 baskets** of grain, there were only **ten**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50 jars** of wine, there were only **20**.

(4) Use a unit of measure that you are already using in your translation.

> > When you came to a heap for **20 liters** of grain, there were only **ten liters**, and when you came to the wine vat to draw out **50 liters** of wine, there were only **20 liters**.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Fractions (UTA PDF)
Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (UTA PDF)

"

Referenced in: Exodus 16:16; Exodus 16:36; Exodus 29:40; Exodus 30:24

Biblical Weight

Description

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

The following terms are the most common units of weight in the Bible. The term “shekel” means “weight,” and many other weights are described in terms of the shekel. Some of these weights were used for money. The metric values in the table below are not exactly equal to the biblical measures. The biblical measures differed in exact amount from time to time and place to place. The equivalents below are only an attempt to give an average measurement.

Original Measure	Shekels	Grams	Kilograms
shekel	1 shekel	11 grams	-
bekah	1/2 shekel	5.7 grams	-
pim	2/3 shekel	7.6 grams	-
gerah	1/20 shekel	0.57 grams	-
mina	50 shekels	550 grams	1/2 kilogram
talent	3,000 shekels	-	34 kilograms

Translation Principles

The people in the Bible did not use modern measures such as meters, liters, and kilograms. Using the original measures can help readers know that the Bible really was written long ago in a time when people used those measures.
Using modern measures can help readers understand the text more easily.
Whatever measure you use, it would be good, if possible, to tell about the other kind of measure in the text or a footnote.
If you do not use the biblical measures, try not to give the readers the idea that the measurements are exact. For example, if you translate one gerah as “.57 grams,” readers might think that the measurement is exact. It would be better to say “half a gram.”
Sometimes it can be helpful to use the word “about” to show that a measurement is not exact. For example, 2 Samuel 21:16 says that Goliath’s spear weighed 300 shekels. Instead of translating this as “3300 grams” or “3.3 kilograms,” it can be translated as “about three and one half kilograms.”
When God tells people how much something should weigh, and when people use those weights, do not say “about” in the translation. Otherwise, it will give the impression that God did not care exactly how much the thing should weigh.

Translation Strategies

(1) Use the measurements from the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See Copy or Borrow Words.)
(2) Use the metric measurements given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.
(3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this, you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.
(4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note.
(5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note.

Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Exodus 38:29 below.

> The bronze from the wave offering weighed **70 talents and 2,400 shekels**. (Exodus 38:29 ULT)

(1) Use the measurements from the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See Copy or Borrow Words.)

> > "The bronze from the wave offering weighed **70 talents and 2,400 sekeles**."

(2) Use the metric measurements given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.

> > "The bronze from the wave offering weighed **2,400 kilograms**."

(3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

> > "The bronze from the wave offering weighed **5,300 pounds**."

(4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a footnote. The following shows both measurements in the text.

> > "The bronze from the wave offering weighed **70 talents (2,380 kilograms)** and **2,400 shekels (26.4 kilograms)**."

(5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a footnote. The following shows the ULT measurements in notes.

> > "The bronze from the offering weighed **70 talents and 2,400 shekels**. 1"

The footnote would look like:

> > [1] This was a total of about 2,400 kilograms.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Fractions (UTA PDF)

"

Referenced in: Exodus 25:39; Exodus 30:13; Exodus 30:24; Exodus 38:24; Exodus 38:25; Exodus 38:26; Exodus 38:27; Exodus 38:29

Blessings

Description

This page answers the question: *What are blessings, and how can I translate them?*

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

Writing Styles (UTA PDF)
Poetry (UTA PDF)

Blessings are short sayings that people use to ask God to do something good for another person. In the Bible, the person saying the blessing speaks or writes directly to the person who will receive the blessing. The person who says the blessing does not directly speak to God, but it is understood that God is the one who will do the good thing mentioned. It is also understood that God hears the blessing, whether he is mentioned by name or not.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Each language has its own ways of saying blessings. There are many blessings in the Bible. They need to be translated in the way that people say blessings in your language, so that people recognize them as blessings and understand what one person wants God to do for another.

Examples From the Bible

In the Bible, people often said a blessing when they met someone or when they were leaving someone or sending someone off.

In the book of Ruth, when Boaz meets his workers in the fields, he greets them with a blessing:

> Then behold, Boaz coming from Bethlehem! And he said to the reapers, “Yahweh be with you.” And they said to him, “May Yahweh bless you.” (Ruth 2:4 ULT)

Similarly, when Rebekah leaves her family, they say farewell with a blessing:

> They blessed Rebekah, and said to her, “Our sister, may you be the mother of thousands of ten thousands, and may your descendants possess the gate of those who hate them.” (Genesis 24:60 ULT)

In a similar way, the writers of letters in the New Testament often wrote a blessing at the beginning of their letters as well as at the end. Here are examples from the beginning and end of Paul’s second letter to Timothy:

> Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. (2 Tim 1:2 ULT) The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you. (2 Tim 4:22 ULT)

Translation Strategies

Find out how people say blessings in your language. Collect a list of common blessings, noting the form of the verb, the use of certain words, and the words that are not used in a blessing but would normally be in a sentence. Also find out what differences there might be between blessings that people use when they are speaking to each other and when they are writing to each other.

If translating a blessing literally would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider doing that. If not, here are some options:

Add a verb if that is natural in your language.
Mention God as the subject of a blessing if that is natural in your language.
Translate the blessing in a form that is natural and clear in your language.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Add a verb if that is natural in your language.

> The Lord with your spirit. The grace with you. (2 Tim 4:22, literal from the Greek)

In the Greek of this verse, there is no verb 'be.' However, in blessings in English, it is natural to use a verb. The idea that the 'grace' from God will be or remain with the person is implied in Greek.

The Lord **be** with your spirit. Grace **be** with you. (2 Tim 4:22 ULT)

(2) Mention God as the subject of a blessing if that is natural in your language.

If people expect a blessing to refer to God in your language, you might have to provide 'God' as the subject or as the source of the blessing. In Greek and Hebrew, usually God is not explicitly mentioned in the blessing, but it is implied that God is the one acting to show his kindness to the person being addressed.

> The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you. (2 Tim 4:22 ULT)

The Lord be with your spirit. **May God give** grace to you.

> They blessed Rebekah, and said to her, "Our sister, may you be the mother of thousands of ten thousands, and may your descendants possess the gate of those who hate them." (Genesis 24:60 ULT)

They blessed Rebekah, and said to her, "Our sister, may **God grant that** you be the mother of thousands of ten thousands, and may **God empower** your descendants **to** possess the gate of those who hate them."

(3) Translate the blessing in a form that is natural and clear in your language.

Here are some ideas for ways that people might say a blessing in their language.

> The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you. (2 Tim 4:22 ULT)

May the Lord be with your spirit. May God cause his grace to be with you.

May you have God's presence with you. May you experience grace from God.

> "Our sister, may you be the mother of thousands of ten thousands, and may your descendants possess the gate of those who hate them." (Genesis 24:60 ULT)

"Our sister, we pray to God that you may be the mother of thousands of ten thousands, and appeal to him that your descendants may possess the gate of those who hate them."

"Our sister, by God's power you will be the mother of thousands of ten thousands, and your descendants will possess the gate of those who hate them."

"

Referenced in: Exodus 4:18

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: Exodus 1:10; Exodus 3:7; Exodus 3:8; Exodus 3:18; Exodus 4:22; Exodus 5:2; Exodus 8:6; Exodus 8:21; Exodus 8:22; Exodus 9:3; Exodus 9:4; Exodus 9:7; Exodus 9:8; Exodus 9:10; Exodus 10:4; Exodus 10:5; Exodus 10:12; Exodus 10:13; Exodus 10:14; Exodus 10:15; Exodus 10:19; Exodus 12:15; Exodus 14:5; Exodus 14:19; Exodus 14:20; Exodus 14:30; Exodus 14:31; Exodus 15:22; Exodus 17:8; Exodus 22:5; Exodus 23:28; Exodus 32:9; Exodus 32:25; Exodus 34:12; Exodus 34:13; Exodus 34:15

Connect — Background Information

Time Relationship

This page answers the question: *How can I translate clauses that give background information?*

Some connectors establish time relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

Background Clause

Description

A background clause is one that describes something that is ongoing. Then, in the same sentence, another clause indicates an event that begins to happen during that time. These events are also simultaneous events, but they have the further relationship of background event and main event because the event that is already happening serves as the background for the other event, the one that is in focus. The background event simply provides the time frame or other context for the main event or events.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Languages indicate a shift in time in different ways. You (the translator) need to understand how these shifts in time are indicated in the original languages in order to communicate them clearly in your own language. Background clauses often indicate a time that began long before the event that is in focus. Translators need to understand how both the source language and the target language communicate background events. Some English words that indicate background events are “now,” “when,” “while,” and “during.” Those words can also indicate simultaneous events. To tell the difference, ask yourself if all of the events seem to be equal in importance and started at about the same time. If so, they are probably simultaneous events. But if an event(s) is ongoing and another event(s) just started, then the ongoing event(s) is probably background to the other event(s). Some common phrases that indicate background events are “in those days” and “at that time.”

Examples From OBS and the Bible

> **When** Solomon was old, he also worshiped their gods. (OBS Story 18 Frame 3)

Solomon began to worship foreign gods at a time when he was old. Being old is the background event. Worshiping other gods is the main event.

> And his parents went **every year** to Jerusalem to the Feast of the Passover. And when he was 12 years old, they went up according to the custom of the feast. (Luke 2:41-42 ULT)

The first event—going to Jerusalem—is ongoing and started long ago. We know this because of the words “every year.” Going to Jerusalem is the background event. Then an event begins that started during the time “when he was twelve years old.” So the main event is the specific time Jesus and his family traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover festival **when he was twelve years old.**

> And it came about that, **while** they were there, the days were fulfilled for her to give birth. (Luke 2:6 ULT)

Being in Bethlehem is the background event. The birth of the baby is the main event.

> And in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar—**while** Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, **during** the high priesthood of

> Annas and Caiaphas—the word of God came to John, the son of Zechariah, in the wilderness. (Luke 3:1-2 ULT)

This example begins with five background clauses (marked by commas), signalled as background by the words "while" and "during." Then the main event happens: "the word of God came to John."

Translation Strategies

If the way that the Background Clauses are marked is also clear in your language, then translate the Background Clauses as they are.

(1) If the connecting word does not make it clear that what follows is a Background Clause, use a connecting word that communicates this more clearly.
(2) If your language marks Background Clauses in a different way than using connecting words (such as by using different verb forms), then use that way.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

> And in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar—**while** Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, **during** the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas—the word of God came to John, the son of Zechariah, in the wilderness. (Luke 3:1-2 ULT)

(1) If the connecting word does not make it clear that what follows is a background clause, use a connecting word that communicates this more clearly.

> **It happened during the time that** Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, **and during the time that** Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, **and during the time that** his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, **and during the time that** Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, **and also during the time that** Annas and Caiaphas were high priests—**that** the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness.

(2) If your language marks background clauses in a different way than using connecting words, such as with different verb forms, then use that way.

> Pontius Pilate **was governing** Judea, and Herod **was ruling over** Galilee, and his brother Philip **was ruling over** the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias **was ruling over** Abilene, and Annas and Caiaphas **were being** high priests—the word of God **came** to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness.

Example of Differences in Time Relationship Connecting Words:

Category	Example
Background setting	Yahweh's word was rare **in those days**;
Background repeated	there was no frequent prophetic vision.
Introduction of main event	**At that time**, **when** Eli
Background	**whose** eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see well,
Simultaneous background	was lying down in his own bed.
Simultaneous background	The lamp of God **had not yet** gone out,
Simultaneous background	**and** Samuel was lying down to sleep in the temple of Yahweh,
Simultaneous background	where the ark of God was.
Main event	**Yahweh called to Samuel**,
Sequential event	who said, "Here I am." (1 Sam 3:1-4 ULT)

In the above example, the first two lines talk about a condition that was going on for a long time. This is the general, long-term background. We know this from the phrase "in those days." After the introduction of the main event ("At that time,"), there are several lines of simultaneous background. The first one is introduced by "when," and then three more follow, with the last connected by "and." The background clause introduced by "where" explains a little more about the background clause before it. Then the main event happens, followed by more events. Translators will need to think about the best way to show these relationships in their language.

"

Referenced in: Exodus 33:7; Exodus 34:34

Connect — Contrary to Fact Conditions

Conditional Relationships

This page answers the question: *How can I translate contrary-to-fact conditions?*

Conditional connectors connect two clauses to indicate that one of them will happen when the other one happens. In English, the most common way to connect conditional clauses is with the words, "if … then." Often, however, the word "then" is not stated.

Contrary-to-Fact Conditions

Description

A Contrary-to-Fact Condition is a condition that sounds hypothetical, but the speaker is already certain that it is NOT true.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Usually there are no special words that indicate a Contrary-to-Fact Condition. The writer assumes that the reader knows that it is NOT a true condition. For this reason it often requires knowledge of implied information to know that it is not true. If this kind of condition is difficult for translators to communicate, they may want to consider using the same strategies that they used for Rhetorical Questions or Implied Information.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

> But **if Baal is God**, worship him! (Story 19 Frame 6 OBS)
>
> Elijah came near to all the people and said, "How long will you keep changing your mind? If Yahweh is God, follow him. But **if Baal is God**, then follow him." Yet the people did not answer him a word. (1 Kings 18:21 ULT)

Baal is not God. Elijah is not suggesting that Baal might be God, and he does not want the people to follow Baal. But Elijah used a conditional statement to show them that what they were doing was wrong. In the example above, we see two conditions that have the same construction. The first one, "If Yahweh is God," is a Factual Condition because Elijah is certain that it is true. The second one, "if Baal is God," is a Contrary-to-Fact Condition because Elijah is certain that it is not true. You will need to consider if people would say both of these in the same way in your language or if they would say them in different ways.

> But his wife replied to him, "**If Yahweh had desired to kill us**, he would not have taken from our hand the whole burnt offering and the offering. He would not have shown us all these things, and at this time would he have not allowed us to hear about this." (Judges 13:23 ULT)

Manoah's wife thinks that the second part of her conditional statement is not true, therefore the first part is also not true. God received their burnt offering; therefore, He does not want to kill them.

> "**If only we had died** by Yahweh's hand in the land of Egypt, sitting by a pot of meat and eating bread to the full." (Exodus 16b:3 ULT)

Of course the people speaking here did not die in Egypt, and so this is a Contrary-to-Fact condition that is used to express a wish.

> "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! **If the mighty deeds had been done** in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, **they would have repented** long ago in sackcloth and ashes." (Matthew 11:21 ULT)

The English reader knows that these last two examples are Contrary-to-Fact conditions because of the past-tense verbs used in the first part (they are not things that might happen). The last example also has a second part that uses "would have." These words also signal something that did not happen.

Translation Strategies

If Contrary-to-Fact conditions are clear in your language, then use them as they are.

(1) If the condition leads the reader to think that the speaker believes something that is false, then restate the condition as something that others believe.
(2) If the condition leads the reader to think that the speaker is suggesting that the first part is true, then restate it as a statement that it is not true.
(3) If the condition is expressing something that did not happen but the speaker wanted it to happen, restate it as a wish.
(4) If the condition is expressing something that did not happen, restate it as a negative statement.
(5) Often Factual and Contrary-to-Fact conditions are used to make reasoned arguments for a change in behavior. If translators are struggling to know the best way to translate them, it could be helpful to discuss how this is done in their language community. If someone is trying to convince people to change their behavior, how do they do that? It may be possible to adapt similar strategies when translating these conditions.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the condition leads the reader to think that the speaker believes something that is false, then restate the condition as something that others believe.

> But **if Baal is God**, worship him! (Story 19 Frame 6 OBS)
>
> > If you believe that Baal is God, then worship him!

(2) If the condition leads the reader to think that the speaker is suggesting that the first part is true, then restate it as a statement that it is not true.

> > If Baal is not God, then you should not worship him!

But his wife replied to him, "**If Yahweh had desired to kill us**, he would not have taken from our hand the whole burnt offering and the offering. He would not have shown us all these things, and at this time would he have not allowed us to hear about this." (Judges 13:23 ULT)

> > "**Yahweh does not want to kill us**, or he would not have received the burnt offering and the offering we gave him."

(3) If the condition is expressing something that did not happen but the speaker wanted it to happen, restate it as a wish.

> "**If only we had died** by Yahweh's hand in the land of Egypt, sitting by a pot of meat and eating bread to the full." (Exodus 16b:3 ULT)
>
> > "**I wish we had died** by Yahweh's hand in the land of Egypt..."

(4) If the condition is expressing something that did not happen, restate it as a negative statement.

> "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! **If the mighty deeds had been done** in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, **they would have repented** long ago in sackcloth and ashes." (Matthew 11:21 ULT)
>
> > "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! The mighty deeds which were done in you **were not done** in Tyre and Sidon. But **if they had been**

> > **done there, those people would have repented** long ago in sackcloth and ashes.”

(5) Often Factual and Contrary-to-Fact Conditions are used to make reasoned arguments for a change in behavior. If translators are struggling to know the best way to translate them, it could be helpful to discuss how this is done in their language community. If someone is trying to convince people to change their behavior, how do they do that? It may be possible to adapt similar strategies when translating these conditions.

> But **if Baal is God**, worship him! (Story 19 Frame 6 OBS)
>
> > Is Baal the one who is truly God? Should you worship him?
>
> “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! **If the mighty deeds had been done** in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, **they would have repented** long ago in sackcloth and ashes.” (Matthew 11:21 ULT)
>
> > “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! You think that you are better than Tyre and Sidon, but you are not! **They would have repented** long ago in sackcloth and ashes at seeing the mighty deeds that you have seen! **You should be like them**!”

"

Referenced in: Exodus 9:30

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: Exodus 1:12; Exodus 1:17; Exodus 2:17; Exodus 3:2; Exodus 4:21; Exodus 5:2; Exodus 5:10; Exodus 5:11; Exodus 7:12; Exodus 13:17; Exodus 24:11; Exodus 33:23; Exodus 34:13

Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

Logical Relationships

This page answers the question: *How can I translate a goal (purpose) relationship?*

Some connectors establish logical relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

Goal (or Purpose) Relationship

Description

A Goal Relationship is a logical relationship in which the second event is the purpose or goal of the first event. In order for something to be a goal relationship, someone must do the first event with the intention that it will cause the second event.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In Scripture, the goal or purpose may be stated either first or second. But in some languages, the goal or purpose must always occur in the same position (either first or second) in order for that logical relationship to be understood. You (the translator) need to understand the relationship between the two parts and communicate those accurately in your language. This may require changing the order of the two events. It may also require specific words to indicate that one is the goal or purpose of the other. Words commonly used to indicate a goal relationship in English are “in order to,” “in order that” or “so that.” It is important that the translator recognize the words that signal a goal relationship and translate that relationship in a natural way.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

> She became angry and falsely accused Joseph **so that he was arrested and sent to prison**. (Story 8 Frame 5 OBS)

The goal or purpose of the woman’s false accusation was to get Joseph arrested and sent to prison.

> Meanwhile Gideon, his son, was threshing out wheat at the winepress **in order to hide from the presence of Midian**. (Judges 6:11b ULT)

Here the prepositional phrase begins with “in order to.”

> Now if I have found favor in your eyes, show me your ways **so that I may know you and continue to find favor in your eyes**. Remember that this nation is your people. (Exodus 33:13 ULT)

Moses wants God to show him God’s ways for the goal or purpose of Moses knowing God and continuing to find favor with God.

> Even be sure to pull some out from the bundles for her and leave it **for her to glean**, and do not rebuke her! (Ruth 2:16 ULT)

The goal or purpose of Boaz instructing the men to pull out the grain from their bundles and leave it was for Ruth to gather (glean) it.

> The shepherds said to each other, “Let us indeed go over as far as Bethlehem, **and let us see this thing that has happened**, which the Lord has made known to us.” (Luke 2:15 ULT)

The purpose of going to Bethlehem was to see the thing that had happened. Here the purpose is not marked and might be misunderstood.

> "... if you want **to enter into life**, keep the commandments." (Matthew 19:17b ULT)

The goal of keeping the commandments is to enter into life.

> Do not turn from it to the right or to the left **so that you may be wise** in everything in which you walk. (Joshua 1:7c ULT)

The purpose of not turning away from the instructions that Moses gave to the Israelites was so that they would be wise.

> But when the vine growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him **and take over his inheritance**.' So they took him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. (Matt 21:38-39 ULT)

The purpose of the vine growers killing the heir was so they could take his inheritance. They state both events as a plan, joining them only with "and." Then the word "so" marks the reporting of the first event, but the second event (the goal or purpose) is not stated.

Translation Strategies

If your language uses Goal or Purpose relationships in the same way as in the text, then use them as they are.

(1) If the construction of the Goal statement is unclear, change it to one that is more clear.
(2) If the order of the statements makes the Goal statement unclear or confusing for the reader, then change the order.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the construction of the goal statement is unclear, change it to one that is more clear.

> "Even be sure to pull some out from the bundles for her and leave it **for her to glean**, and do not rebuke her!" (Ruth 2:16 ULT)
>
> > "Even be sure to pull some out from the bundles for her and leave it **so that she can glean it**, and do not rebuke her!"
>
> The shepherds said to each other, "Let us indeed go over as far as Bethlehem, **and let us see this thing that has happened**, which the Lord has made known to us." (Luke 2:15 ULT)
>
> > The shepherds said to each other, "Let us indeed go over as far as Bethlehem **so that we can see this thing that has happened**, which the Lord has made known to us."

(2) If the order of the statements makes the goal statement unclear or confusing for the reader, then change the order.

> "... if you want **to enter into life**, keep the commandments." (Matthew 19:17bULT)
>
> > "... keep the commandments if you want **to enter into life**." or: "... keep the commandments **so that you can enter into life**."
>
> But when the vine growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him **and take over his inheritance**.' So they took him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. (Matt 21:38-39 ULT)

(1) and (2)

> But when the vine growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him **and take over his inheritance**.' So they took him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. (Matt 21:38-39 ULT)
>
> > But when the vine growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him **so that we can take over his inheritance**.' So they took him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him **so that they could take over his inheritance**.

"

Referenced in: Exodus 2:4; Exodus 2:7; Exodus 6:27; Exodus 7:5; Exodus 7:18; Exodus 8:10; Exodus 8:20; Exodus 8:22; Exodus 9:16; Exodus 12:48; Exodus 29:36; Exodus 30:10; Exodus 30:20; Exodus 33:5

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: Exodus 1:10; Exodus 1:16; Exodus 3:13; Exodus 12:44; Exodus 12:48; Exodus 21 Chapter Introduction; Exodus 21:2; Exodus 22 Chapter Introduction; Exodus 22:1; Exodus 33:5; Exodus 33:15; Exodus 34:12; Exodus 34:16

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: Exodus 1:19; Exodus 1:20; Exodus 1:21; Exodus 2:2; Exodus 2:6; Exodus 3:5; Exodus 3:6; Exodus 3:8; Exodus 3:10; Exodus 3:20; Exodus 4:14; Exodus 4:21; Exodus 4:26; Exodus 5:19; Exodus 6:6; Exodus 6:9; Exodus 6:12;

Exodus 7:5; Exodus 7:18; Exodus 9:14; Exodus 13:21; Exodus 23:21; Exodus 30:32; Exodus 32:10; Exodus 32:24; Exodus 32:34; Exodus 32:35; Exodus 33:17; Exodus 34:15; Exodus 34:16; Exodus 34:30

Connect — Sequential Time Relationship

Time Relationships

This page answers the question: *How do I translate clauses with a sequential time relationship?*

Some connectors establish time relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

Sequential Clause

Description

A sequential clause is a time relation that connects two events in which one happens and then the other happens.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Languages indicate sequences of events in different ways; some use ordering, some use connecting words, some even use relative tense (Relative tense is a tense that refers to a time in relation to a reference point in the context.) Connecting words that may indicate sequence are words such as “then,” “later,” “after,” “afterward,” “before,” “first,” and “when.” Translators need to be certain that they communicate the order of the events in a way that is natural in their language. This may require ordering clauses differently than in the original languages.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

> **When** Joseph came to his brothers, they kidnapped him and sold him to some slave traders. (OBS Story 8 Frame 2)

First Joseph came to his brothers, and then they kidnapped and sold him. We know this because of the connecting word “**when**.” The translator needs to decide the best way to communicate this sequence clearly and correctly.

> It was as sweet as honey in my mouth, but **after** I ate it, my stomach became bitter. (Revelation 10:10b ULT)

The event of the first clause occurs first, and the event of the last clause occurs later. We know this because of the connecting word “**after**.” The translator needs to decide the best way to communicate this sequence clearly and correctly.

> For **before** the child knows to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be desolate (Isaiah 7:16 ULT)

The event of the first clause occurs after the event of the second clause. First the land they dread will be desolate, and then the child will know to refuse evil and choose good. We know this because of the connecting word “**before**.” However, stating the clauses in this order may communicate the wrong order of events in your language. The translator may have to change the order so that the clauses come in the order that they happen. Or it may be possible to keep the order of the original language text and mark the ordering of sequence so that it is clear to the readers. You (the translator) need to decide the best way to communicate this sequence clearly and correctly.

> Then Mary arose in those days **and** quickly went into the hill country, to a city of Judah, **and** she entered into the house of Zechariah **and** greeted Elizabeth. (Luke 1:39-40 ULT)

Here the general connector “**and**” connects four events. These are sequential events—each happens after the one before it. We know this because that is the only way that these events would happen. So in English, the general connector “and” is enough to make the sequence clear for events such as these. You will need to decide if this also communicates this sequence clearly and correctly in your language.

Translation Strategies

If the sequence of events is clear in your language, then translate the sequence as it is.

(1) If the connecting word is not clear, use a connecting word that communicates the sequence more clearly.
(2) If the clauses are in an order that makes the sequence unclear, put the clauses in an order that is more clear.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the connecting word is not clear, use a connecting word that communicates the sequence more clearly.

> Then Mary arose in those days **and** quickly went into the hill country, to a city of Judah, **and** she entered into the house of Zechariah **and** greeted Elizabeth. (Luke 1:39-40 ULT)
>
> > Then Mary arose in those days. **Then** she quickly went into the hill country, to a city of Judah. **Then** she entered into the house of Zechariah, **and then** she greeted Elizabeth.
>
> For **before** the child knows to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be desolate (Isaiah 7:16 ULT)
>
> > For the time will come when the child knows to refuse the evil and choose the good, **but even before that time**, the land whose two kings you dread will be desolate.

(2) If the clauses are in an order that makes the sequence unclear, put the clauses in an order that is more clear.

> For the land whose two kings you dread will be desolate **before** the child knows to refuse the evil and choose the good.

For more about sequences of events, see Sequence of Events.

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Referenced in: Exodus 1:6; Exodus 2:10; Exodus 2:11; Exodus 3:20; Exodus 4:4; Exodus 4:19; Exodus 4:20; Exodus 5:1; Exodus 6:1; Exodus 11:1; Exodus 24:14

Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship

Time Relationships

This page answers the question: *How can I translate clauses with a simultaneous time relationship?*

Some connectors establish time relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

Simultaneous Clause

Description

A simultaneous clause is a time relationship that connects two or more events that occur at the same time.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Languages indicate in many different ways that events occur simultaneously. These ways may vary based on whether or not something is causing the events to occur simultaneously. Connecting words that may indicate simultaneous events are words such as "while," "as," and "during." Often the Bible does not state a relationship between the events but simply says they occurred at the same time. It is important that you (the translator) know when a time relationship is implied and when it is not implied so that you can communicate it clearly. A simultaneous clause communicates that events happened at the same time but it does not indicate that one event caused the other. That would be a reason-and-result relationship.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

> Joseph served his master well, **and** God blessed Joseph. (OBS Story 8 Frame 4)

Two events happened while Joseph was a slave to a wealthy government official: Joseph served well, and God blessed Joseph. There is no indication of a reason-and-result (cause and effect) relationship between the two, or that the first event happened, and then the second event happened.

> But in truth I say to you that there were many widows in Israel **during** the days of Elijah. (Luke 4:25b ULT)

The connecting word "**during**" tells us clearly that two things happened at the same time, but one event did not cause the other.

> And the people were waiting for Zechariah, **and** they were wondering at his delaying in the temple. (Luke 1:21 ULT)

The people were both waiting and wondering at the same time. The general connector "**and**" indicates this.

> **While** they were looking intensely into heaven **as** he was going up, suddenly, two men stood by them in white clothing. (Acts 1:10 ULT)

Three events happened at the same time — the disciples looking, Jesus going up, and two men standing. The connector words "**while**" and "**as**" tell us this.

Translation Strategies

If the way that the simultaneous clauses are marked also is clear in your language, then translate the simultaneous clauses as they are.

(1) If the connecting word does not make it clear that the simultaneous clauses are happening at the same time, use a connecting word that communicates this more clearly.
(2) If it is not clear which clause the simultaneous clause is connected to, and that they are happening at the same time, mark all of the clauses with a connecting word.
(3) If your language marks events as simultaneous in a different way than using connecting words, then use that way.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

Below, each Bible verse will be restated in three different ways, according to the translation strategies in the list above. Each restatement will have the same number as the translation strategy that it is using.

> And the people were waiting for Zechariah, **and** they were wondering at his delaying in the temple. (Luke 1:21 ULT)

(1) Now **while** the people were waiting for Zechariah, they were wondering at his delaying in the temple.

(2) Now **while** the people were waiting for Zechariah, they were **also** wondering at his delaying in the temple.

(3) Now the people were waiting for Zechariah, wondering at his delaying in the temple.

> **While** they were looking intently into heaven **as** he was going up, suddenly, two men stood by them in white clothing. (Acts 1:10 ULT)

(1) And **during the time** they were looking intently into heaven **while** he was going up, suddenly, two men stood by them in white clothing.

(2) And **while** they were looking intently into heaven **as** he was going up, suddenly, **at that same time** two men stood by them in white clothing.

(3) They were looking intently into heaven; he was going up **when** they saw two men standing by them in white clothing.

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Referenced in: Exodus 2:10; Exodus 8:25; Exodus 29:10; Exodus 29:15; Exodus 32 General Notes

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: Exodus 5:5

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 — צְפַנְיָה
>
> > "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: Exodus 6:3; Exodus 28:30

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: Exodus 1:18; Exodus 1:22; Exodus 2:10; Exodus 2:14; Exodus 2:18; Exodus 4:23; Exodus 4:26; Exodus 5:10; Exodus 6:4; Exodus 6:11; Exodus 7:2; Exodus 7:9; Exodus 8:1; Exodus 8:5; Exodus 8:8; Exodus 8:16; Exodus 8:20; Exodus 9:13; Exodus 10:3; Exodus 14:2; Exodus 14:3; Exodus 14:12; Exodus 14:26; Exodus 25:2; Exodus 32:26; Exodus 33:5; Exodus 33:12; Exodus 35:4; Exodus 36:5; Exodus 36:6

Double Negatives

A double negative occurs when a clause has two words that each express the meaning of "not." Double negatives mean very different things in different languages. To translate sentences that have double negatives accurately and clearly, you need to know what a double negative means in the Bible and how to express this idea in your language.

This page answers the question: *What are double negatives?*

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

Parts of Speech (UTA PDF)
Sentence Structure (UTA PDF)

Description

Negative words are words that have in them the meaning "not." Examples in English are "no," "not," "none," "no one," "nothing," "nowhere," "never," "nor," "neither," and "without." Also, some words have prefixes or suffixes that mean "not," such as the bolded parts of these words: "**un**happy," "**im**possible," and "use**less**." Some other kinds of words also have a negative meaning, such as "lack" or "reject," or even "fight" or "evil."

A double negative occurs when a clause has two words that each have a negative meaning.

> We did this **not** because we have **no** authority ... (2 Thessalonians 3:9a ULT)
>
> And this was **not** done **without** an oath! (Hebrews 7:20a ULT)
>
> Be sure of this—the wicked person will **not** go **un**punished. (Proverbs 11:21a ULT)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Double negatives mean very different things in different languages.

- In some languages, such as English, a second negative in a clause cancels the first one, creating a positive sentence. So, "He is not unintelligent" means "He is intelligent."
- In some languages, such as French and Spanish, two negative words in a clause do not cancel each other to become a positive. The Spanish sentence, "No vi a nadie," literally says "I did not see no one." It has both the word 'no' next to the verb and 'nadie,' which means "no one." The two negatives are seen as in agreement with each other, and the sentence means, "I did not see anyone."
- In some languages, a double negative creates a stronger negative statement.
- In some languages, a double negative creates a positive sentence, but it is a weak statement. So, "He is not unintelligent" means, "He is somewhat intelligent."
- In some languages, including the languages of the Bible, a double negative can produce a stronger positive meaning than a simple positive statement. So, "He is not unintelligent" can mean "He is very intelligent." In this case, the double negative is actually the figure of speech called litotes.

Biblical Greek can do all of the above. So to translate sentences with double negatives accurately and clearly in your language, you need to know what each double negative means in the Bible and how to express the same idea in your language.

Examples From the Bible

The Greek of John 15:5 says:

> χωρὶς ἐμοῦ **οὐ** δύνασθε ποιεῖν **οὐδέν**
> Without me **not** you can do **nothing**

We cannot reproduce this double negative in the English ULT because in English, a second negative in a clause cancels the first one. In English, and perhaps in your language, we need to choose only one of the negatives and say either:

Without me, you can do **nothing**.
or:
Without me, you **cannot** do anything.

> ... in order **not** to be **unfruitful**. (Titus 3:14b ULT)

This means “in order to be fruitful.”

> A prophet is **not without** honor (Mark 6:4 ULT)

This means "a prophet is honored."

> I do **not** want you to be **ignorant**. (1 Corinthians 12:1)

This means "I want you to be knowledgeable."

Translation Strategies

If the way that the double negative is used in the Bible is natural and has the same meaning as in your language, consider using it in the same way. Otherwise, you could consider these strategies:

(1) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a positive statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove the two negatives so that it is positive.
(2) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a negative statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove one of the two negatives.
(3) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a stronger negative statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove one of the two negatives and add a strengthening word.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a positive statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove the two negatives so that it is positive.

> For we do **not** have a high priest who **cannot** feel sympathy for our weaknesses. (Hebrews 4:15a ULT)
>
> > “For we have a high priest who can feel sympathy for our weaknesses.”
>
> ... in order **not** to be **unfruitful**. (Titus 3:14b ULT)
>
> > “... so that they may be fruitful.”

(2) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a negative statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove one of the two negatives.

> χωρὶς ἐμοῦ **οὐ** δύνασθε ποιεῖν **οὐδέν**
> Without me **not** you can do **nothing** (John 15:5)
>
> > Without me, you can do **nothing**.
> > or:
> > Without me, you **cannot** do anything.

(3) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a stronger negative statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove one of the two negatives and add a strengthening word.

> ...ἰῶτα ἓν ἢ μία κεραία **οὐ μὴ** παρέλθῃ ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου (Matthew 5:18)
> ...iota one or one serif **not not** may pass away from the law
>
> > ...**not even** one iota or one serif may pass away from the law
> > or:
> > ...**certainly no** iota or serif may pass away from the law

Next we recommend you learn about:

Verbs (UTA PDF)

"

Referenced in: Exodus 3:21; Exodus 5:11; Exodus 8:29; Exodus 12:30; Exodus 12:48; Exodus 20:7; Exodus 21:10; Exodus 22:22; Exodus 22:29; Exodus 23:15; Exodus 23:26; Exodus 28:28; Exodus 34:20

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: Exodus 1:7; Exodus 1:20; Exodus 4:10; Exodus 7:3; Exodus 15:16; Exodus 23:7; Exodus 32:11; Exodus 32:30; Exodus 32:31; Exodus 34:6; Exodus 34:8; Exodus 34:9; Exodus 39:32; Exodus 39:40; Exodus 40:2; Exodus 40:6

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: Exodus 4:5; Exodus 8:2; Exodus 14:4; Exodus 14:17; Exodus 14:18; Exodus 20:5; Exodus 20:6; Exodus 23:2; Exodus 27:11; Exodus 27:18; Exodus 30:23; Exodus 32:32; Exodus 34:7; Exodus 34:15; Exodus 35:5; Exodus 35:10; Exodus 36:6; Exodus 38:11; Exodus 38:22; Exodus 38:26; Exodus 38:28; Exodus 40:2

End of Story

Description

This page answers the question: *What kinds of information are given at the end of a story?*

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

Writing Styles (UTA PDF)

Background Information (UTA PDF)

There are different types of information that may be given at the end of a story. Often this is background information. This background information is different from the actions that make up the main part of the story. A book of the Bible is often made up of many smaller stories that are part of the larger story of the book itself. For example, the story of Jesus' birth is a smaller story in the larger story of the book of Luke. Each of these stories, whether large or small, can have background information at the end of it.

The following are purposes for end of story information:

- to summarize the story
- to give a conclusion about what the story means or what is important about it
- to connect a smaller story to the larger story it is a part of
- to tell the reader what happens to a specific character after the main part of the story ends
- to tell on-going action that continues after the main part of the story ends
- to tell what happens after the story as a result of the events that happened in the story itself

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages have different ways of presenting these kinds of information. If you (the translator) do not use your language's ways of doing this, readers may not know:

- that this information is ending the story
- what the purpose of the information is
- how the information is related to the story

Translation Strategies

- Translate the particular kind of information at the end of a story the way your language expresses that kind of information.
- Translate it so that people will understand how it relates to the story it is part of.
- If possible, translate the end of the story in a way that people will know where that story ends and the next begins.

Examples From the Bible

- To summarize the story

> Then the rest of the men should follow, some on planks, and some on other things from the ship. **In this way it happened that all of us were brought safely to the land.** (Acts 27:44 ULT)

- To give a conclusion about what the story means or what is important about it

> Many of those who practiced magical arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of everyone. Then they counted the value of them, and found it was 50,000 pieces of silver. **So the word of the Lord was spreading and prevailing with power.** (Acts 19:19-20 ULT)

• To tell the reader what happens to a specific character after the main part of the story ends

> And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoiced in God my savior.” **And Mary stayed with her about three months and then returned to her house.** (Luke 1:46-47, 56 ULT)

• To tell on-going action that continues after the main part of the story ends

> All who those who heard it were amazed concerning the things that were spoken to them by the shepherds. **But Mary kept all the things, pondering them in her heart.** (Luke 2:18-19 ULT)

• To tell what happens after the story as a result of the events that happened in the story itself

> “Woe to you, experts in the Jewish law, because you have taken away the key of knowledge; you do not enter in yourselves, and you hinder those who are entering.” **After he went from there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to fiercely oppose him and argued against him about many things, lying in wait to trap him in something from his mouth.** (Luke 11:52-54 ULT)

"

Referenced in: Exodus 11:10; Exodus 39:32; Exodus 39:43

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: Exodus 4:25; Exodus 5:16; Exodus 19:15; Exodus 19:21; Exodus 21:10; Exodus 22:16; Exodus 22:19; Exodus 28:42; Exodus 32:6

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: Exodus 1:9; Exodus 2:6; Exodus 2:13; Exodus 3:9; Exodus 4:6; Exodus 4:7; Exodus 5:17

Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

Description

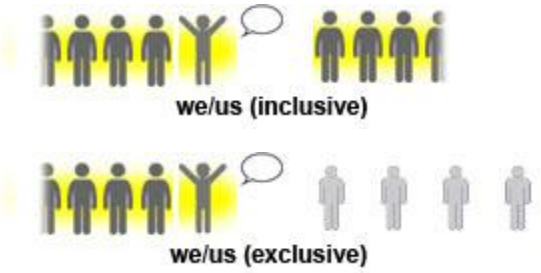
This page answers the question: *What are the exclusive and inclusive forms of "we"?*

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: Exodus 1:10; Exodus 3:18; Exodus 5:3; Exodus 8:10; Exodus 8:26; Exodus 8:27; Exodus 10:9; Exodus 10:25; Exodus 10:26

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: Exodus 4:10; Exodus 4:20; Exodus 5:3; Exodus 5:15; Exodus 5:16; Exodus 8:29; Exodus 9:3; Exodus 9:4; Exodus 9:5; Exodus 15:26; Exodus 23:25; Exodus 24:1; Exodus 24:2; Exodus 25:9; Exodus 27:8; Exodus 28:35; Exodus 28:38; Exodus 29:24; Exodus 30:15; Exodus 32:4; Exodus 32:8; Exodus 32:22; Exodus 34:6; Exodus 34:7

Forms of You

Singular, Dual, and Plural

This page answers the question: *What are the different forms of you?*

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

Forms of 'You' — Singular (UTA PDF)
Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural (UTA PDF)

Some languages have more than one word for "you" based on how many people the word "you" refers to. The **singular** form refers to one person, and the **plural** form refers to more than one person. Some languages also have a **dual** form which refers to two people, and some languages have other forms that refer to three or four people.

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_younum.

Sometimes in the Bible a speaker uses a singular form of "you" even though he is speaking to a crowd. For help with translating these, we suggest you read:

- Singular Pronouns that Refer to Groups

Formal and Informal

Some languages have more than one form of "you" based on the relationship between the speaker and the person he or she is talking to. People use the **formal** form of "you" when speaking to someone who is older, or has higher authority, or is someone they do not know very well. People use the **informal** form when speaking to someone who is not older, or does not have higher authority, or is a family member or close friend.

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_youform.

For help with translating these, we suggest you read:

- Forms of "You" — Formal or Informal

Masculine and Feminine

Some languages have a **masculine** form and a **feminine** form of the word for "you." People use the **masculine** form when speaking to a man or boy and the **feminine** form when speaking to a woman or girl.

English does not make any of the above distinctions, so they are absent in the ULT. Please be aware of this and use the appropriate forms of "you" if your language does make any of these distinctions.

"

Referenced in: Exodus 30:12; Exodus 30:26; Exodus 30:36

Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural

Description

This page answers the question: *How do I know if the word 'you' is dual or plural?*

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

Forms of You (UTA PDF)
Pronouns (UTA PDF)
Parts of Speech (UTA PDF)

Some languages have a singular form of "you" for when the word "you" refers to just one person, and a plural form for when the word "you" refers to more than one person. Some languages also have a dual form of "you" for when the word "you" refers to only two people. Translators who speak one of these languages will always need to know what the speaker meant so they can choose the right word for "you" in their language. Other languages, such as English, have only one form, which people use regardless of how many people it refers to.

The Bible was first written in the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages. These languages all have a singular form of "you" and a plural form of "you." When we read the Bible in those languages, the pronouns and verb forms show us whether the word "you" refers to one person or more than one person. However, they do not show us whether it refers to only two people or more than two people. When the pronouns do not show us how many people the word "you" refers to, we need to look at the context to see how many people the speaker was speaking to.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Translators who speak a language that has distinct singular, dual, and plural forms of "you" will always need to know what the speaker meant so they can choose the right word for "you" in their language.
- Many languages also have different forms of the verb depending on whether the subject is singular or plural. So even if there is no pronoun meaning "you," translators of these languages will need to know if the speaker was referring to one person or more than one.

Often the context will make it clear whether the word "you" refers to one person or more than one. If you look at the other pronouns in the sentence, they will help you know how many people the speaker was addressing.

Examples From the Bible

> Then **James and John**, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him, saying to him, "Teacher, we desire that you to do for us whatever we ask you." 36 So he said to them, "What do **you** want me to do for **you**?" (Mark 10:35-36 ULT)

Jesus is asking the two, James and John, what they want him to do for them. If the target language has a dual form of "you," use that. If the target language does not have a dual form, then the plural form would be appropriate.

> Jesus sent out two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the village opposite us. As soon as **you** enter it, **you** will find a colt tied there, on which no one has yet sat. Untie it and bring it to me." (Mark 11:1b-2 ULT)

The context makes it clear that Jesus is addressing two people. If the target language has a dual form of "you," use that. If the target language does not have a dual form, then the plural form would be appropriate.

> James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes who are in the dispersion: Greetings. Consider it all joy, my brothers, when **you** experience various troubles. You know that the testing of **your** faith produces endurance. (James 1:1-3 ULT)

James wrote this letter to many people, so the word "you" refers to many people. If the target language has a plural form of "you," it would be best to use it here.

Strategies for finding out how many people "you" refers to

(1) Look at the translationNotes to see if they tell whether "you" refers to one person or more than one person.
(2) Look at the UST to see if it says anything that would show you whether the word "you" refers to one person or more than one person.
(3) If you have a Bible that is written in a language that distinguishes "you" singular from "you" plural, see which form of "you" that Bible has in that sentence.
(4) Look at the context to see who the speaker was talking to and who responded.

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_youdual.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Forms of 'You' — Singular (UTA PDF)

"

Referenced in: Exodus 1:16; Exodus 1:18; Exodus 1:22; Exodus 3:12; Exodus 3:16; Exodus 3:18; Exodus 3:20; Exodus 3:21; Exodus 3:22; Exodus 4:15; Exodus 5:4; Exodus 5:5; Exodus 5:7; Exodus 5:8; Exodus 5:10; Exodus 5:11; Exodus 5:14; Exodus 5:17; Exodus 5:18; Exodus 5:21; Exodus 6:6; Exodus 6:7; Exodus 6:8; Exodus 7:4; Exodus 7:9; Exodus 8:25; Exodus 8:28; Exodus 9:3; Exodus 9:8; Exodus 10:16; Exodus 10:17; Exodus 10:24; Exodus 11:1; Exodus 11:7; Exodus 12 Chapter Introduction; Exodus 12:3; Exodus 12:31; Exodus 14:2; Exodus 19:4; Exodus 25:2; Exodus 25:9; Exodus 30:1; Exodus 30:36; Exodus 30:37; Exodus 34:10

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: Exodus 12:44; Exodus 25:9; Exodus 25:22; Exodus 26:1; Exodus 28:1; Exodus 28:3; Exodus 30:6; Exodus 33:14; Exodus 33:17

Fractions

Description

This page answers the question: *What are fractions and how can I translate them?*

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

Numbers (UTA PDF)

A fraction is a number that represents part of a whole. When an item is divided into several equal parts, a fraction refers to one or more of those parts.

For the drink offering, you must offer **a third** of a hin of wine. (Numbers 15:7a ULT)

A hin is a container of a set size which is used for measuring wine and other liquids. The people were to think about dividing a hin container into three equal parts, filling up only one of those parts and offering that amount.

> ... **a third** of the ships were destroyed. (Revelation 8:9b ULT)

There were many ships. If all those ships were divided into three equal groups of ships, one group of ships was destroyed.

Most fractions in English simply have the letters “th” added to the end of the number, such as fourth, sixth, ninth, tenth.

| Number of parts the whole is divided into | Fraction | | -------- | -------- | | four | fourth | | ten | tenth | | one hundred | one hundredth | | one thousand | one thousandth |

Some fractions in English do not follow that pattern.

| Number of parts the whole is divided into | Fraction | | -------- | -------- | | two | half | | three | third | | five | fifth |

Reason This is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not use fractions. They may simply talk about parts or groups, but they do not use fractions to tell how big a part is or how many parts are included in a group.

Examples From the Bible

> Now to the **half-tribe** of Manasseh, Moses had given a possession in Bashan, but to the other **half**, Joshua gave a possession among their brothers across the Jordan on the west. (Joshua 22:7 ULT)

The tribe of Manasseh divided into two groups. The phrase “the half-tribe of Manasseh” refers one of those groups. The phrase “the other half” refers to the other group.

> So the four angels who had been prepared for that hour, that day, that month, and that year, were released so that they would kill **a third** of mankind. (Revelation 9:15 ULT)

If all the people in the world were to be divided into three equal groups, then the number of people in one group would be killed.

> You must also prepare **a fourth** of a hin of wine as the drink offering. (Numbers 15:5 ULT)

They were to imagine dividing a hin of wine into four equal parts and prepare the amount equal to one of them.

Translation Strategies

If a fraction in your language would give the right meaning, consider using it. If not, you could consider these strategies.

(1) Tell the number of parts or groups that the item would be divided into, and then tell the number of parts or groups that is being referred to.
(2) For measurements such as for weight and length, use a unit that your people might know or the unit in the UST.
(3) For measurements, use ones that are used in your language. In order to do that you would need to know how your measurements relates to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

Examples of These Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Tell the number of parts or groups that the item would be divided into, and then tell the number of parts or groups that is being referred to.

> **A third** of the ocean became red like blood (Revelation 8:8 ULT)
>
> > It was like they **divided** the ocean **into three parts**, and **one part** of the ocean became blood.
>
> Then you must offer with the bull a grain offering of **three-tenths** of an ephah of fine flour mixed with **half a hin** of oil. (Numbers 15:9 ULT)
>
> > ... then you must **divide** an ephah of fine flour **into ten parts** and **divide** a hin of oil **into two parts**. Then mix **three of those parts** of the flour with **one of the parts** of oil. Then you must offer that grain offering along with the bull.

(2) For measurements, use the measurements that are given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.

> ... **two-thirds of a shekel** ... (1 Samuel 13:21b ULT)
>
> ... **eight grams** of silver ... (1 Samuel 13:21b UST)
>
> ... **three-tenths of an ephah** of fine flour mixed with **half a hin** of oil. (Numbers 15:9b ULT)
>
> > ... **six and one-half liters** of finely ground flour mixed with **two liters** of olive oil. (Numbers 15:9b UST)

(3) For measurements, use ones that are used in your language. In order to do that you would need to know how your measurements relates to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

> ... **three-tenths of an ephah** of fine flour mixed with **half a hin** of oil. (Numbers 15:9b ULT)
>
> > **six quarts** of fine flour mixed with **two quarts** of oil.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Ordinal Numbers (UTA PDF)
Biblical Money (UTA PDF)

"

Referenced in: Exodus 16:36; Exodus 25:10; Exodus 25:17; Exodus 25:23; Exodus 26:12; Exodus 26:16; Exodus 29:40; Exodus 30:13; Exodus 38:26

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: Exodus 15:1; Exodus 16:19; Exodus 36:6; Exodus 36:8

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: Exodus 1:1; Exodus 2:5; Exodus 2:8; Exodus 2:11; Exodus 2:13; Exodus 2:16; Exodus 2:17; Exodus 2:18; Exodus 3:1; Exodus 3:8; Exodus 3:13; Exodus 3:21; Exodus 4:14; Exodus 4:18; Exodus 5:1; Exodus 5:15; Exodus 8:24; Exodus 15:17; Exodus 19:13; Exodus 19:20

Hebrew Months

Description

This page answers the question: *What are the Hebrew months?*

The Hebrew calendar used in the Bible has twelve months. Unlike the western calendar, its first month begins in the spring of the northern hemisphere. Sometimes a month is called by its name (Aviv, Ziv, Sivan), and sometimes it is called by its order in the Hebrew calendar year (first month, second month, third month).

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may be surprised to read of months that they have never heard of, and they may wonder how those months correspond to the months that they use.
- Readers may not realize that phrases such as “the first month” or “the second month” refer to the first or second month of the Hebrew calendar, not some other calendar.
- Readers may not know when the first month of the Hebrew calendar begins.
- The Bible may tell about something happening in a certain month, but readers will not be able to fully understand what is said about it if they do not know what season of the year that was.

List of Hebrew Months

This is a list of the Hebrew months with information about them that may be helpful in the translation.

Aviv — (This month was called **Nisan** after the Babylonian exile.) This is the first month of the Hebrew calendar. It marks when God brought the people of Israel out of Egypt. It is at the beginning of the spring season when the late rains come and people begin to harvest their crops. It is during the last part of March and the first part of April on western calendars. The Passover celebration started on Aviv 10; the Festival of Unleavened Bread was right after that, and the Festival of Harvest was a few weeks after that.

Ziv — This is the second month of the Hebrew calendar. This is during the harvest season. It is during the last part of April and the first part of May on Western calendars.

Sivan — This is the third month of the Hebrew calendar. It is at the end of the harvest season and the beginning of the dry season. It is during the last part of May and the first part of June on Western calendars. The Feast of Weeks is celebrated on Sivan 6.

Tammuz — This is the fourth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the dry season. It is during the last part of June and the first part of July on Western calendars.

Ab — This is the fifth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the dry season. It is during the last part of July and the first part of August on Western calendars.

Elul — This is the sixth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is at the end of the dry season and the beginning of the rainy season. It is during the last part of August and the first part of September on Western calendars.

Ethanim — This is the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar. This is during the early rain season which would soften the land for sowing. It is during the last part of September and the first part of October on Western calendars. The Feast of Ingathering and the Day of Atonement are celebrated in this month.

Bul — This is the eighth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the rainy season when people plough their fields and sow seed. It is during the last part of October and the first part of November on Western calendars.

Kislev — This is the ninth month of the Hebrew calendar. This is at the end of the sowing season and the beginning of the cold season. It is during the last part of November and the first part of December on Western calendars.

Tebeth — This is the tenth month of the Hebrew calendar. It is during the cold season when there may be rain and snow. It is during the last part of December and the first part of January on Western calendars.

Shebat — This is the eleventh month of the Hebrew calendar. This is the coldest month of the year, and it has heavy rainfall. It is during the last part of January and the first part of February on Western calendars.

Adar — This is the twelfth and last month of the Hebrew calendar. This is during the cold season. It is during the last part of February and the first part of March on western calendars. The feast called Purim is celebrated in Adar.

Examples From the Bible

> Today you are going out, in **the month of Aviv**. (Exodus 13:4 ULT)
>
> You must eat unleavened bread from evening of the fourteenth day **in the first month of the year**, until evening of the twenty-first day of the month. (Exodus 12:18 ULT)

Translation Strategies

You may need to make some information about the months explicit. (See Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information.)

(1) Tell the number of the Hebrew month.
(2) Use the names for months that people know.
(3) State clearly what season the month occurred in.
(4) Refer to the time in terms of the season rather than in terms of the Hebrew name of the month. (If possible, use a footnote to show the Hebrew month and day.)

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

The examples below use these two verses.

> At that time, you will appear before me in **the month of Aviv**, which is fixed for this purpose. It was in this month that you came out from Egypt. (Exodus 23:15b ULT)
>
> It will always be a statute for you that in **the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month,** you must humble yourselves and do no work. (Leviticus 16:29a ULT)

(1) Tell the number of the Hebrew month.

> > At that time, you will appear before me in **the first month of the year**, which is fixed for this purpose. It was in this month that you came out from Egypt.

(2) Use the months that people know.

> > At that time, you will appear before me in **the month of March**, which is fixed for this purpose. It was in this month that you came out from Egypt.
> >
> > It will always be a statute for you that **on the day I choose in late September** you must humble yourselves and do no work.

(3) State clearly what season the month occurs in.

> > It will always be a statute for you that **in the autumn, on the tenth day of the seventh month,** you must humble yourselves and do no work.

(4) Refer to the time in terms of the season rather than in terms of the month.

> It will always be a statute for you that in **the day I choose in early autumn**[1] you must humble yourselves and do no work.

The footnote would look like:

> [1] The Hebrew says, “the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month.”

Next we recommend you learn about:

Ordinal Numbers (UTA PDF)

"

Referenced in: Exodus 12:2; Exodus 12:14; Exodus 12:18; Exodus 13:4; Exodus 16:1; Exodus 23:15; Exodus 34:18

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 Exodus; Exodus 1:1; Exodus 1:15; Exodus 2:18; Exodus 2:21; Exodus 2:22; Exodus 4:25; Exodus 6:14; Exodus 6:15; Exodus 6:16; Exodus 6:17; Exodus 6:18; Exodus 6:19; Exodus 6:20; Exodus 6:21; Exodus 6:22; Exodus 6:23; Exodus 6:24; Exodus 6:25; Exodus 12:37; Exodus 13:20; Exodus 14:2; Exodus 14:9; Exodus 15:22; Exodus 15:23; Exodus 15:27; Exodus 16 Chapter Introduction; Exodus 16:1; Exodus 17 Chapter Introduction; Exodus 17:1; Exodus 17:7; Exodus 17:8; Exodus 17:10; Exodus 18:3; Exodus 18:4; Exodus 19:2; Exodus 24:1; Exodus 24:9; Exodus 24:14; Exodus 28:1; Exodus 31:2; Exodus 31:6; Exodus 34:11; Exodus 35:30; Exodus 35:34; Exodus 36:1; Exodus 38:21; Exodus 38:22; Exodus 38:23

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: Exodus 5:12; Exodus 7:24; Exodus 8:17; Exodus 8:31; Exodus 9:6; Exodus 10:6; Exodus 15:20; Exodus 16:2; Exodus 17:14; Exodus 32:3; Exodus 34:7; Exodus 35:23; Exodus 35:24

Hypothetical Situations

This page answers the question: *What is a hypothetical situation?*

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

Writing Styles (UTA PDF)

Consider these phrases: “If the sun stopped shining …” “What if the sun stopped shining …” “Suppose the sun stopped shining …” and “If only the sun had not stopped shining.” We use such expressions to set up hypothetical situations, imagining what might have happened or what could happen in the future but probably will not. We also use them to express regret or wishes. Hypothetical expressions occur often in the Bible. You (the translator) need to translate them in a way that people will know that the event did not actually happen and so that they will understand why the event was imagined.

Description

Hypothetical situations are situations that are not real. They can be in the past, present, or future. Hypothetical situations in the past and present have not happened, are not happening now, and ones in the future are not expected to happen.

People sometimes tell about conditions and what would happen if those conditions were met, but they know that these things have not happened or probably will not happen. (The conditions comprise a phrase that starts with “if.”)

- If he had lived to be 100 years old, he would have seen his grandson’s grandson. (But he did not.)
- If he lived to be 100 years old, he would still be alive today. (But he is not.)
- If he lives to be 100 years old, he will see his grandson’s grandson. (But he probably will not.)

People sometimes express wishes about things that have not happened or that are not expected to happen.

- I wish he had come.
- I wish he were here.
- I wish he would come.

People sometimes express regrets about things that have not happened or that are not expected to happen.

- If only he had come.
- If only he were here.
- If only he would come.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Translators need to recognize the different kinds of hypothetical situations in the Bible and understand that they are unreal.
- Translators need to know their own language’s ways of talking about different kinds of hypothetical situations.

Examples From the Bible

Hypothetical Situations in the Past

> “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! **If the mighty deeds had been done** in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, **they would have repented** long ago in sackcloth and ashes.” (Matthew 11:21 ULT)

Here in Matthew 11:21, Jesus said that **if** the people living in the ancient cities of Tyre and Sidon had been able to see the miracles that he performed, they would have repented long ago. The people of Tyre and Sidon did not actually see his miracles, and they did not repent. He said this to rebuke the people of Chorazin and Bethsaida who had seen his miracles and yet did not repent.

> Martha then said to Jesus, "Lord, **if you had been here, my brother would not have died**." (John 11:21 ULT)

Martha said this to express her wish that Jesus would have come sooner so that her brother would not have died. But Jesus did not come sooner and her brother did die.

Hypothetical Situations in the Present

> And no man puts new wine into old wineskins. **But if he did do that, the new wine would burst the wineskins, and it would be spilled out, and the wineskins would be destroyed**. (Luke 5:37 ULT)

Jesus told about what would happen if a person were to put new wine into old wineskins. But no one would do that. He used this imaginary situation as an example to show that there are times when it is unwise to mix new things with old things. He did this so that people could understand why his disciples were not fasting as people traditionally did.

> Jesus said to them, "What man would there be among you, who, **if he had just one sheep, and if this sheep fell into a deep hole on the Sabbath, would not grasp hold of it and lift it out**?" (Matthew 12:11 ULT)

Jesus asked the religious leaders what they would do on the Sabbath if one of their sheep fell into a hole. He was not saying that their sheep would fall into a hole. He used this imaginary situation to show them that they were wrong to judge him for healing people on the Sabbath.

Hypothetical Situation in the Future

> **Unless those days are shortened, no flesh would be saved**. But for the sake of the elect, those days will be shortened. (Matthew 24:22 ULT)

Jesus was talking about a future time when very bad things would happen. He told what would happen if those days of trouble were to last a long time. He did this to show how bad those days will be—so bad that if they lasted a long time, no one would be saved. But then he clarified that God will shorten those days of trouble so that the elect (those he has chosen) will be saved.

Expressing Emotion About a Hypothetical Situation

People sometimes talk about hypothetical situations in order to express regrets and wishes. Regrets are about the past and wishes are about the present and future.

> The Israelites said to them, "**If only we had died by Yahweh's hand in the land of Egypt when we were sitting by the pots of meat and were eating bread to the full.** For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill our whole community with hunger." (Exodus 16:3 ULT)

Here the Israelites were afraid that they would have to suffer and die of hunger in the wilderness, and so they wished that they had stayed in Egypt and died there with full stomachs. They were complaining, expressing regret that this had not happened.

> I know what you have done, and that you are neither cold nor hot. **I wish that you were either cold or hot!** (Revelation 3:15 ULT)

Jesus wished that the people were either hot or cold, but they are neither. He was rebuking them, expressing anger at this.

Translation Strategies

Find out how people speaking your language show:

- that something could have happened, but did not.
- that something could be true now, but is not.
- that something could happen in the future, but will not unless something changes.
- that they wish for something, but it does not happen.
- that they regret that something did not happen.

Use your language's ways of showing these kinds of things.

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_hypo.

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Referenced in: Exodus 8:8; Exodus 9:15; Exodus 13:17; Exodus 16:3; Exodus 34:12; Exodus 34:15

Idiom

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)

An idiom is a figure of speech made up of a group of words that, as a whole, has a meaning that is different from what one would understand from the meanings of the individual words. Someone from outside of the culture usually cannot understand an idiom without someone inside the culture explaining its true meaning. Every language uses idioms. Some English examples are:

- You are pulling my leg. (This means, "You are teasing me by telling me something that is not true.")
- Do not push the envelope. (This means, "Do not take a matter to its extreme.")
- This house is under water. (This means, "The debt owed for this house is greater than its actual value.")
- We are painting the town red. (This means, "We are going around town tonight celebrating very intensely.")

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: Exodus 1:7; Exodus 2:1; Exodus 2:19; Exodus 2:24; Exodus 3:7; Exodus 3:16; Exodus 3:17; Exodus 3:18; Exodus 3:21; Exodus 4:14; Exodus 4:18; Exodus 5:7; Exodus 5:8; Exodus 5:9; Exodus 5:14; Exodus 5:23; Exodus 7:7; Exodus 7:23; Exodus 7:25; Exodus 8:28; Exodus 10:28; Exodus 10:29; Exodus 11:3; Exodus 11:7; Exodus 11:8; Exodus 12:36; Exodus 15:26; Exodus 17:12; Exodus 22:8; Exodus 22:24; Exodus 23:1; Exodus 23:26; Exodus 23:27; Exodus 24:3; Exodus 24:14; Exodus 24:17; Exodus 25:2; Exodus 25:27; Exodus 26:5; Exodus 26:6; Exodus 26:17; Exodus 28:41; Exodus 29:1; Exodus 29:9; Exodus 29:29; Exodus 29:33; Exodus 29:35; Exodus 29:38; Exodus 29:39; Exodus 29:41; Exodus 30:4; Exodus 30:8; Exodus 30:12; Exodus 30:13; Exodus 30:14; Exodus 31:2; Exodus 31:6; Exodus 32:1; Exodus 32:10; Exodus 32:11; Exodus 32:12; Exodus 32:19; Exodus 32:22; Exodus 32:26; Exodus 32:29; Exodus 33:12; Exodus 33:16; Exodus 33:17; Exodus 34:6; Exodus 34:9; Exodus 34:10; Exodus 34:12; Exodus 34:15; Exodus 34:27; Exodus 35:5; Exodus 35:34; Exodus 36:3; Exodus 36:4; Exodus 38:21; Exodus 38:26

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: Exodus 32:16; Exodus 33:16; Exodus 34:1; Exodus 34:13; Exodus 34:29; Exodus 35:29

Introduction of a New Event

Description

This page answers the question: *How do we introduce a new event in a story?*

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

Writing Styles (UTA PDF)
Order of Events (UTA PDF)

When people tell a story, they tell about an event or a series of events. Often they put certain information at the beginning of the story, such as who the story is about, when it happened, and where it happened. This information that the writer gives before the events of the story begin is called the setting of the story. Some new events in a story also have a setting because they might involve new people, new times, and new places. In some languages, people also tell if they saw the event or heard about it from someone else.

When your people tell about events, what information do they give at the beginning? Is there a certain order that they put it in? In your translation, you will need to follow the way your language introduces new information at the beginning of a story or a new event rather than the way the source language did that. In this way your translation will sound natural and communicate clearly in your language.

Examples From the Bible

> **In the days of Herod**, king of Judea, **there was a certain priest named Zechariah**, from the division of Abijah. And **his wife was** from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. (Luke 1:5 ULT)

The verses above introduce a story about Zechariah. The first bolded phrase tells when it happened, and the next two bolded phrases introduce the main people. The next two verses go on to explain that Zechariah and Elizabeth were old and did not have any children. All of this is the setting. Then the phrase “And it happened that” in Luke 1:8 helps to introduce the first event in this story:

> **And it happened that** in his performing as priest before God, in the order of his division, according to the custom of the priesthood, he came up by lot to enter into the temple of the Lord to burn incense. (Luke 1:8-9 ULT)

> **The birth of Jesus Christ happened in the following way.** His mother, Mary, was engaged to marry Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant by the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 1:18 ULT)

The bolded sentence above makes it explicit that a story about Jesus is being introduced. The story will tell about how the birth of Jesus happened.

> **Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king**, behold, learned men from the east arrived in Jerusalem. (Matthew 2:1 ULT)

The bolded phrase above shows that the events concerning the learned men happened **after** Jesus was born.

> **Now in those days** John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea. (Matthew 3:1-22 ULT)

The bolded phrase above shows that John the Baptist came preaching around the time of the previous events. It is probably very general and refers to when Jesus lived in Nazareth.

> **Then** Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan River to John, to be baptized by him. (Matthew 3:13 ULT)

The word “then” shows that Jesus came to the Jordan River some time after the events in the previous verses.

> Now there was **a man from the Pharisees whose name was Nicodemus, a Jewish leader**. This man came to Jesus at night. (John 3:1-2a ULT)

The author first introduced the new person and then told about what he did and when he did it. In some languages, it might be more natural to tell about the time first.

> 6 Noah was 600 years old when the flood came upon the earth. 7 Noah, his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives went into the ark together because of the waters of the flood. (Genesis 7:6-7 ULT)

Verse 6 is a statement of the events that happen in the rest of chapter 7. Chapter 6 already told about how God told Noah that there would be a flood, and how Noah prepared for it. Chapter 7 verse 6 introduces the part of the story that tells about Noah and his family and the animals going into the ship, the rain starting, and the rain flooding the earth. Some languages might need to make it clear that this verse simply introduces the event, or move this verse after verse 7. Verse 6 is not one of the events of the story. The people went into the ship before the flood came.

Translation Strategies

If the information given at the beginning of a new event is clear and natural to your readers, consider translating it as it is in the ULT or UST. If not, consider one of these strategies:

(1) Put the information that introduces the event in the order that your people put it.
(2) If readers would expect certain information but it is not in the Bible, consider using an indefinite word or phrase to fill in that information, such as: "another time" or "someone."
(3) If the introduction is a summary of the whole event, use your language's way of showing that it is a summary.
(4) If it would be strange in the target language to give a summary of the event at the beginning, indicate that the event would actually happen later in the story.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Put the information that introduces the event in the order that your people put it.

> Now there was **a man from the Pharisees whose name was Nicodemus, a Jewish leader**. This man came to Jesus at night. (John 3:1-2a ULT)
>
> > There was a **man whose name was Nicodemus. He was a Pharisee and a member of the Jewish Council**. One night he came to Jesus.
> >
> > One night **a man named Nicodemus, who was a Pharisee and a member of the Jewish Council**, came to Jesus.
>
> As he passed by, **he saw Levi the son of Alpheus, sitting** at the tax collector's tent, and he said to him ... (Mark 2:14a ULT)
>
> > As he passed by, **Levi the son of Alpheus was sitting** at the tax collector's tent. Jesus saw him and and said to him ...
> >
> > As he passed by, **there was a man sitting** at the tax collector's tent. His name was Levi, and he was the son of Alpheus. Jesus saw him and said to him ...
> >
> > As he passed by, **there was a tax collector** sitting at the tax collector's tent. His name was Levi, and he was the son of Alpheus. Jesus saw him and said to him ...

(2) If readers would expect certain information, but it is not in the Bible, consider using an indefinite word or phrase such as “another time,” or “someone.”

> Noah was 600 years old when the flood came upon the earth. (Genesis 7:6 ULT) — If people expect to be told something about when the new event happened, the phrase “after that” can help them see that it happened after the events already mentioned.
>
> > **After that**, when Noah was 600 years old, the flood came upon the earth.
>
> **Again he began** to teach beside the sea. (Mark 4:1a ULT) — In chapter 3 Jesus was teaching at someone’s house. Readers may need to be told that this new event happened at another time, or that Jesus actually went to the sea.
>
> > **Another time** Jesus began to teach people again beside the sea.
> >
> > Jesus went to the sea and **began to teach people again** there.

(3) If the introduction is a summary of the whole event, use your language’s way of showing that it is a summary.

> Noah was 600 years old when the flood came upon the earth. (Genesis 7:6 ULT)
>
> > **Now this is what happened when** Noah was 600 years old and the flood came upon the earth.
> >
> > **This part tells about what happened when** the flood came upon the earth. It happened when Noah was 600 years old.

(4) If it would be strange in the target language to give a summary of the event at the beginning, show that the event will actually happen later in the story.

> Noah was 600 years old when the flood came upon the earth. Noah, his sons, his wife, and his sons’ wives went into the ark together because of the waters of the flood. (Genesis 7:6-7 ULT)
>
> > **Now this is what happened when** Noah was 600 years old. Noah, his sons, his wife, and his sons’ wives went into the ark together because **God had said that the waters of the flood would come**.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Background Information (UTA PDF)
Introduction of New and Old Participants (UTA PDF)

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Referenced in: Exodus 1:8; Exodus 1:15; Exodus 2:1; Exodus 2:11; Exodus 2:16; Exodus 2:23; Exodus 3:1; Exodus 4:24; Exodus 4:27; Exodus 4:29; Exodus 5:1; Exodus 5:10; Exodus 5:15; Exodus 5:20; Exodus 6:2; Exodus 6:28; Exodus 7:8; Exodus 7:14; Exodus 7:25; Exodus 8:12; Exodus 8:16; Exodus 8:20; Exodus 8:24; Exodus 8:30; Exodus 9:1; Exodus 9:8; Exodus 9:13; Exodus 9:22; Exodus 9:27; Exodus 10:12; Exodus 10:21; Exodus 12:21; Exodus 13:17; Exodus 16:22; Exodus 17:1; Exodus 17:8; Exodus 18:13; Exodus 24:1; Exodus 24:3; Exodus 24:9; Exodus 29:1; Exodus 32:1; Exodus 32:7; Exodus 33:12; Exodus 34:29; Exodus 39:32; Exodus 40:1; Exodus 40:16

Introduction of New and Old Participants

Description

This page answers the question: *Why cannot the readers of my translation understand who the author was writing about?*

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

Parts of Speech (UTA PDF)

Writing Styles (UTA PDF)

The first time that people or things are mentioned in a story, they are **new participants**. After that, whenever they are mentioned, they are **old participants**.

> Now **there was a man from the Pharisees whose name was Nicodemus** ... **This man** came to Jesus at night ... Jesus replied and said to **him** ... (John 3:1, 2a, 3a)

The first bolded phrase introduces Nicodemus as a new participant. After being introduced, he is then referred to as “This man” and “him” when he has become an old participant.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In order to make your translation clear and natural, it is necessary to refer to the participants in such a way that people will know if they are new participants or participants that they have already read about. Different languages have different ways of doing this. You must follow the way that your language does this, not the way that the source language does this.

Examples From the Bible

New Participants

Often the most important new participant is introduced with a phrase that says that he existed, such as “There was a man,” as in the example below. The phrase “There was” tells us that this man existed. The word “a” in “a man” tells us that the author is speaking about him for the first time. The rest of the sentence tells where this man was from, who is family was, and what his name was.

> **Now there was a man** from Zorah, of the families of the Danites, and his name was Manoah. (Judges 13:2a ULT)

A new participant who is not the most important participant is often introduced in relation to the more important person who was already introduced. In the example below, Manoah’s wife is simply referred to as “his wife.” This phrase shows her relationship to him.

> Now there was one man from Zorah, of the families of the Danites, and his name was Manoah. **His wife** was barren and she had never given birth. (Judges 13:2 ULT)

Sometimes a new participant is introduced simply by name because the author assumes that the readers know who the person is. In the first verse of 1 Kings, the author assumes that his readers know who King David is, so there is no need to explain who he is.

> Now King David was old, he had advanced in the days, and they covered him with the garments, but it was not warm enough for him. (1 Kings 1:1 ULT)

Old Participants

A person who has already been brought into the story can be referred to with a pronoun after that. In the example below, Manoah is referred to with the pronoun “his,” and his wife is referred to with the pronoun “she.”

> **His wife** was barren and **she** had never given birth. (Judges 13:2 ULT)

Old participants can also be referred to in other ways, depending on what is happening in the story. In the example below, the story is about bearing a son, and Manoah's wife is referred to by the noun phrase "the wife."

> The angel of Yahweh appeared to **the wife** and he said to her ... (Judges 13:3a ULT)

If the old participant has not been mentioned for a while, or if there could be confusion between participants, the author may use the participant's name again. In the example below, Manoah is referred to by his name, which the author has not used since verse 2.

> Then **Manoah** prayed to Yahweh. (Judges 13:8a ULT)

Some languages place an affix on the verb that tells something about the subject. In some of those languages, people do not always use noun phrases or pronouns for old participants when they are the subject of the sentence. The marker on the verb gives enough information for the listener to understand who the subject is. (See Verbs.)

Translation Strategies

(1) If the participant is new, use one of your language's ways of introducing new participants.
(2) If it is not clear to whom a pronoun refers, use a noun phrase or name.
(3) If an old participant is referred to by name or a noun phrase, and people wonder if this is another new participant, try using a pronoun instead. If a pronoun is not needed because people would understand it clearly from the context, then leave out the pronoun.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the participant is new, use one of your language's ways of introducing new participants.

> Then Joseph, who was called Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated as Son of Encouragement), a Levite from Cyprus by birth ... (Acts 4:36-37 ULT) — Starting the sentence with Joseph's name when he has not been introduced yet might be confusing in some languages.
>
> > There was a man from Cyprus who was a Levite. His name was Joseph, and he was given the name Barnabas by the apostles (that is, being interpreted, Son of Encouragement). There was a Levite from Cyprus whose name was Joseph. The apostles gave him the name Barnabas, which means Son of encouragement.

(2) If it is not clear who a pronoun refers to, use a noun phrase or name.

> And it happened that when he was praying in a certain place, when he stopped, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples." (Luke 11:1 ULT) — Since this is the first verse in a chapter, readers might wonder who "he" refers to.
>
> > It happened when **Jesus** finished praying in a certain place, that one of his disciples said, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples."

(3) If an old participant is referred to by name or a noun phrase, and people wonder if this is another new participant, try using a pronoun instead. If a pronoun is not needed because people would understand it clearly from the context, then leave out the pronoun.

> Joseph's master took Joseph and put him in prison, in the place where all the king's prisoners were put, and Joseph stayed there. (Genesis 39:20) — Since Joseph is the main person in the story, some languages might prefer the pronoun.

> Joseph's master took **him** and put **him** in prison, in the place where all the king's prisoners were put, and **he** stayed there in the prison.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Pronouns — When to Use Them (UTA PDF)

"

Referenced in: Exodus 1:8; Exodus 1:15; Exodus 2:1; Exodus 2:5; Exodus 2:9; Exodus 2:16; Exodus 2:17; Exodus 2:18; Exodus 4:18; Exodus 4:25; Exodus 4:27; Exodus 5:1; Exodus 5:13; Exodus 17:8; Exodus 17:9; Exodus 17:10; Exodus 24:13; Exodus 32:17; Exodus 33:11

Irony

Description

This page answers the question: *What is irony and how can I translate it?*

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

Figures of Speech (UTA PDF)

Irony is a figure of speech in which the sense that the speaker intends to communicate is actually the opposite of the literal meaning of the words. Sometimes a person does this by using someone else's words, but in a way that communicates that he does not agree with them. People do this to emphasize how different something is from what it should be, or how someone else's belief about something is wrong or foolish. It is often humorous.

> Then Jesus answered and said to them, "People who are well do not have need of a physician, but those who have sickness. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." (Luke 5:31-32 ULT)

When Jesus spoke of "the righteous," he was not referring to people who were truly righteous, but to people who wrongly believed that they were righteous. By using irony, Jesus communicated that they were wrong to think that they were better than others and did not need to repent.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

If someone does not realize that a speaker is using irony, he will think that the speaker actually believes what he is saying. He will understand the passage to mean the opposite of what it was intended to mean.

Examples From the Bible

> **How well you reject the commandment of God** so that you may keep your tradition! (Mark 7:9b ULT)

Here Jesus praises the Pharisees for doing something that is obviously wrong. Through irony, he communicates the opposite of praise: He communicates that the Pharisees, who take great pride in keeping the commandments, are so far from God that they do not even recognize that their traditions are breaking God's commandments. The use of irony makes the Pharisee's sin more obvious and startling.

> "Present your case," says Yahweh; "present your best arguments for your idols," says the King of Jacob. **"Let them bring us their own arguments; have them come forward and declare to us what will happen, so we may know these things well. Have them tell us of earlier predictive declarations, so we can reflect on them and know how they were fulfilled**." (Isaiah 41:21-22 ULT)

People worshiped idols as if their idols had knowledge or power, and Yahweh was angry at them for doing that. So he used irony and challenged their idols to tell what would happen in the future. He knew that the idols could not do this, but by speaking as if they could, he mocked the idols, making their inability more obvious, and rebuked the people for worshiping them.

> Can you lead light and darkness to their places of work? Can you find the way back to their houses for them? **You know, for you were born then, and the number of your days is many!** (Job 38:20-21 ULT)

Job thought that he was wise. Yahweh used irony to show Job that he was not so wise. The two phrases in bold above are irony. They emphasize the opposite of what they say, because they are so obviously false. They emphasize that Job could not possibly answer God's questions about the creation of light because Job was not born until many, many years later.

> Already you are satisfied! Already you have become rich! **You began to reign** apart from us, and I wish you really did reign, so that we also might reign with you. (1 Corinthians 4:8 ULT)

The Corinthians considered themselves to be very wise, self-sufficient, and not in need of any instruction from the Apostle Paul. Paul used irony, speaking as if he agreed with them, to show how proudly they were acting and how far from being wise they really were.

Translation Strategies

If the irony would be understood correctly in your language, translate it as it is stated. If not, here are some other strategies.

(1) Translate the irony in a way that shows that the speaker is saying what someone else believes.
(2) Translate the actual, intended meaning of the statement of irony. (Remember: The true meaning of the irony is **not** found in the literal words of the speaker, but instead the true meaning is found in the opposite of the literal meaning of the speaker's words.)

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Translate it in a way that shows that the speaker is saying what someone else believes.

> **How well you reject the commandment of God** so that you may keep your tradition! (Mark 7:9a ULT)
>
> > **You think that you are doing well when you reject God's commandment** so you may keep your tradition!
> > or:
> > **You act like it is good to reject God's commandment** so you may keep your tradition!
>
> I did not come to call **the righteous**, but sinners to repentance. (Luke 5:32 ULT)
>
> > I did not come to call **people who think that they are righteous** to repentance, but to call people who know that they are sinners to repentance.

(2) Translate the actual, intended meaning of the statement of irony.

> **How well you reject the commandment of God** so that you may keep your tradition! (Mark 7:9a ULT)
>
> > **You are doing a terrible thing when you reject the commandment of God** so you may keep your tradition!
>
> "Present your case," says Yahweh; "present your best arguments for your idols," says the King of Jacob. "**Let them bring us their own arguments; have them come forward and declare to us what will happen**, so we may know these things well. **Have them tell us of earlier predictive declarations, so we can reflect on them and know how they were fulfilled**." (Isaiah 41:21-22 ULT)
>
> > 'Present your case,' says Yahweh; 'present your best arguments for your idols,' says the King of Jacob. **Can your idols bring us their own arguments or come forward to declare to us what will happen** so we may know these things well? **No!** We cannot hear them because **they cannot speak** to tell us their earlier predictive declarations, so we cannot reflect on them and know how they were fulfilled.

> Can you lead light and darkness to their places of work? Can you find the way back to their houses for them? **You know, for you were born then, and the number of your days is many!** (Job 38:20-21 ULT)
>
> > Can you lead light and darkness to their places of work? Can you find the way back to their houses for them? **You act like you know how light and darkness were created, as if you were there; as if you are as old as creation, but you are not**!

Next we recommend you learn about:

Litotes (UTA PDF)

"

Referenced in: Exodus 2:14; Exodus 8:9

Kinship

Description

This page answers the question: *What are kinship terms and how can I translate them?*

Kinship terms refer to those words used to describe people related to one another in familial relationships. These terms vary widely in their specificity from language to language. They range from the (Western) nuclear or immediate family (father-son, husband-wife) out to broad clan relationships in other cultures.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Depending on the language translators may need to use specific terms to designate the accurate kinship relationship. In some languages a different term may be used based on siblings' birth order. In others, the side of the family (father's or mother's), age, marital status, etc. may determine the term used. Different terms may be used based on the gender of the speaker and/or addressee. Translators may need to make sure they know the exact relationship between two related people in the Bible to find the correct term. Sometimes these terms are difficult even for native speakers to remember and translators may need to seek community help in finding the correct term. Another complicating issue is that the Bible may not give enough information about the relationship for translators to determine the correct term in the language being translated into. In this case, translators will have to use a more general term or simply pick a satisfactory term based on the limited information available.

Sometimes terms that seem like kinship terms are used for people who are not necessarily related. For instance, an older person may refer to a younger man or woman as "my son" or "my daughter."

Examples from the Bible

> Then Yahweh said to Cain, "Where is Abel **your brother**?" He said, "I do not know. Am I **my brother's** keeper?" (Genesis 4:9 ULT)

Abel was Cain's younger brother.

> Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field to his flock and said to them, "I see **your father's** attitude toward me has changed, but the God of my father has been with me." (Genesis 31:4-5 ULT)

Jacob is referring here to his father-in-law. In some languages there may be a specific term for a man's father-in-law, however, in this case it is better to retain the form **your father** as Jacob may be using it to distance himself from Laban.

> And Moses was shepherding the flock of Jethro **his father-in-law**, the priest of Midian. (Exodus3:1a ULT)

Unlike the previous instance, if your language has a term for a man's father-in-law this is a good place to use it.

> And **his sister** stationed herself at a distance to know what would be done to him. (Exodus 2:4 ULT)

From context we know that this was Miriam, Moses's older sister. In some languages this may require a specific term. In others, the term for older sister may be only used when the younger sibling is addressing and/or referring to his or her sister.

> Then she and **her daughters-in-law** arose to return from the fields of Moab (Ruth 1:6a ULT)

Ruth & Orpah are Naomi's daughters-in-law.

> Then she said, “Look, your sister-in-law has turned back to her people and to her gods.” (Ruth 1:15 ULT)

Orpah had been the wife of Ruth’s husband’s brother. This may be a different term in your language than if she had been Ruth’s husband’s sister.

> Then Boaz said to Ruth, “Will you not listen to me, **my daughter**?” (Ruth 2:8a ULT)

Boaz is not Ruth’s father; he is simply using the term to address a younger woman.

> And behold, **your relative** Elizabeth—she also has conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren. (Luke 1:36 ULT)

While the KJV translated this as **cousin**, the term simply means a related woman.

Translation Strategies

(1) Find out the exact relationship specified and translate using the term your language uses.

(2) If the text does not specify the relationship as clearly as your language would, either:

(a) settle on a more general term.

(b) use a specific term if required by your language, choosing the one that is most likely to be correct.

Translation Strategies Applied

This is not an issue in English, so the following illustrations draw on other languages.

In Korean, there are several terms for brother and sister, the use of them depends on the speaker’s (or referent’s) sex and birth order. Examples are from the Korean Living Bible, found on biblegateway.com

> Genesis 30:1 Rachel is jealous of her “eonni,” which is the term a woman uses for her older sister.
>
> Genesis 34:31 Simeon and Levi refer to Dinah as “nui,” a general term for sister.
>
> Genesis 37:16 Joseph refers to his brothers as “hyeong,” which is the term a man uses for his older brother(s).
>
> Genesis 45:12 Joseph refers to Benjamin as “dongsaeng,” which roughly means sibling, usually younger.

In Russian, in-law terms are complex. For instance, “nevéstka” is the term for a brother’s (or brother-in-law’s) wife; a woman uses the same term for her daughter-in-law but her husband would call the same daughter-in-law “snoxá.” Examples from the Russian Synodal Version.

> Genesis 38:25 Tamar sends a message to her father-in-law, Judah. The term used is “svekor.” This is used for a woman’s husband’s father.
>
> Exodus 3:1 Moses is watching his father-in-law’s herd. The term used is “test’.” This is used for a man’s wife’s father.

"

Referenced in: Exodus 1:6; Exodus 2:4; Exodus 4:14; Exodus 4:18; Exodus 6:20; Exodus 7:2; Exodus 18 Chapter Introduction; Exodus 18:1; Exodus 28:1; Exodus 28:41

Litany

Description

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

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

Figures of Speech (UTA PDF)

A litany is a figure of speech in which the various components of a thing are listed in a series of very similar statements. The speaker does this to indicate that what he is saying should be understood as comprehensive and without exceptions. In a sense, the speaker is describing an overwhelming situation by overwhelming his audience with an excessive series of statements.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Many languages do not use litanies, and readers could be confused by them. They may wonder why the speaker seems to be saying the same thing over and over again.

Examples From the Bible

> Though they dig into Sheol, there my hand will take them. Though they climb up to heaven, there I will bring them down. Though they hide on the top of Carmel, there I will search and take them. Though they are hidden from my sight in the bottom of the sea, there will I give orders to the serpent, and it will bite them. Though they go into captivity, driven by their enemies before them, there will I give orders to the sword, and it will kill them. (Amos 9:2-4 ULT)

In this passage Yahweh is telling the people of Israel that when he punishes them, none of them will escape.

> But you should not have looked on the day of your brother, on the day of his misfortune. And you should not have rejoiced over the sons of Judah in the day of their perishing. And you should not have made your mouth great in a day of distress. You should not have entered the gate of my people in the day of their calamity. Yes, you! You should not have looked on his evil in the day of his calamity. And you women should not have looted his wealth in the day of his calamity. And you should not have stood at the crossroads to cut down his fugitives. And you should not have delivered up his survivors in a day of distress. (Obadiah 1:12–14)

In this passage Yahweh is telling the people of Edom that they should have helped the people of Judah when they were conquered by the Babylonians.

Translation Strategies

If the litany is understood as it is in the ULT, then translate the litany as it is. If it is not understood, then try one or more of the following strategies.

(1) Often in the Bible there will be a general statement at the beginning or end of a litany that sums up its overall meaning. You can format that statement in a way that will show that it is a summary statement that gives the meaning of the litany.
(2) You can put each sentence of the litany on a separate line. Also, if each sentence in the litany has two parts, you can format the litany so that the equivalent parts of each sentence line up. Use this or any other type of formatting that will show that each sentence is reinforcing the same meaning.
(3) You can eliminate words like “and,” “but,” and “or” at the beginning of sentences so that it will be clearer that the component parts of the litany are all being listed in a row.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) combined with (3):
Often in the Bible there will be a general statement at the beginning or end of a litany that sums up its overall meaning. You can format that statement in a way that will show that it is a summary statement that gives the meaning of the litany;
You can eliminate words like “and,” “but,” and “or” at the beginning of sentences so that it will be clearer that the component parts of the litany are all being listed in a row.

> > You did nothing to help the Israelites when strangers carried away their wealth. They conquered all the cities of Judah, and they even plundered Jerusalem. And you were just as bad as those foreigners, because you did nothing to help:
>
> You should not have looked on the day of your brother, on the day of his misfortune. You should not have rejoiced over the sons of Judah in the day of their perishing. You should not have made your mouth great in a day of distress. You should not have entered the gate of my people in the day of their calamity. Yes, you! You should not have looked on his evil in the day of his calamity. You women should not have looted his wealth in the day of his calamity. You should not have stood at the crossroads to cut down his fugitives. You should not have delivered up his survivors in a day of distress. (Obadiah 1:11-14)

In the above example, verse 11 provides the summary and meaning for the litany that follows in verses 12-14.

(1) combined with (2):
Often in the Bible there will be a general statement at the beginning or end of a litany that sums up its overall meaning. You can format that statement in a way that will show that it is a summary statement that gives the meaning of the litany;
You can put each sentence of the litany on a separate line. Also, if each sentence in the litany has two parts, you can format the litany so that the equivalent parts of each sentence line up. Use this or any other type of formatting that will show that each sentence is reinforcing the same meaning.

> > Not one of them will get away, not one of them will escape:
>
> Though they dig into Sheol, there my hand will take them.
> Though they climb up to heaven, there I will bring them down.
> Though they hide on the top of Carmel, there I will search and take them.
> Though they are hidden from my sight in the bottom of the sea, there will I give orders to the serpent, and it will bite them.
> Though they go into captivity, driven by their enemies before them, there will I give orders to the sword, and it will kill them.
> (Amos 9:1b–4 ULT)

In the above example, the sentence before the litany explains its overall meaning. That sentence can be placed as an introduction. The second half of each sentence can be formatted in a descending staircase pattern as above, or lined up evenly like the first half of each sentence, or in another way. Use whatever format best shows that these sentences are all communicating the same truth, that it is not possible to escape from God.

"

Referenced in: Exodus 34:7; Exodus 35:22

Litotes

Description

This page answers the question: *What is litotes?*

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

Figures of Speech (UTA PDF)

Litotes is a figure of speech in which the speaker expresses a strong positive meaning by negating a word or phrase that means the opposite of the meaning that he intends. For example, someone could intend to communicate that something is extremely good by describing it as “not bad.” The difference between a litotes and a double negative is that a litotes heightens the positive meaning beyond what a plain positive statement would do, and a double negative does not. In the example above, the literal meaning of "not bad," taken as a plain double negative, would be "acceptable" or even "good." But if the speaker intended it as a litotes, then the meaning is "very good" or "extremely good."

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not use litotes. People who speak those languages might not understand that a statement using litotes actually strengthens the positive meaning. Instead, they might think that it weakens or even cancels the positive meaning.

Examples From the Bible

> For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was **not useless**, (1 Thessalonians 2:1 ULT)

By using litotes, Paul emphasized that his visit with them was **very** useful.

> Now when it became day, there was **no small disturbance** among the soldiers over what therefore had happened to Peter. (Acts 12:18 ULT)

By using litotes, Luke emphasized that there was a **lot** of excitement or anxiety among the soldiers about what happened to Peter. (Peter had been in prison, and even though there were soldiers guarding him, he escaped when an angel let him out. So they were very agitated.)

> But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are **not the least** among the leaders of Judah, for from you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel. (Matthew 2:6 ULT)

By using litotes, the prophet emphasized that Bethlehem would be a **very important city**.

Translation Strategies

If the litotes would be understood correctly, consider using it.

(1) If the meaning with the negative would not be clear, give the **positive** meaning in a strong way.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the meaning with the negative would not be clear, give the **positive** meaning in a strong way.

> For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was **not useless**. (1 Thessalonians 2:1 ULT)
>
> > “For you yourselves know, brothers, our visit to you **did much good**.”

> Now when it became day, there was **no small disturbance** among the soldiers over what therefore had happened to Peter. (Acts 12:18 ULT)
>
> > “Now when it became day, there was **great excitement** among the soldiers, regarding what had happened to Peter.”
> > or:
> > “Now when it became day, the soldiers were **very concerned** because of what had happened to Peter.”

"

Referenced in: Exodus 3:21; Exodus 9:6; Exodus 9:7; Exodus 9:28; Exodus 14:28

Merism

Definition

This page answers the question: *What does the word merism mean and how can I translate phrases that have it?*

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

Figures of Speech (UTA PDF)

Merism is a figure of speech in which a person refers to something by speaking of two extreme parts of it. By referring to the extreme parts, the speaker intends to include also everything in between those parts.

> "I am **the alpha and the omega**," says the Lord God, "the one who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." (Revelation 1:8 ULT)
>
> I am **the alpha and the omega**, **the first and the last**, **the beginning and the end**. (Revelation 22:13, ULT)

Alpha and omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. This is a merism that includes everything from the beginning to the end. It means eternal.

> ... I praise you, Father, Lord of **heaven and earth** ..., (Matthew 11:25b ULT)

Heaven and earth is a merism that includes everything that exists.

Reason This is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not use merism. The readers of those languages may think that the phrase only applies to the items mentioned. They may not realize that it refers to those two things and everything in between.

Examples From the Bible

> **From the rising of the sun to its setting**, Yahweh's name should be praised. (Psalm 113:3 ULT)

This bolded phrase is a merism because it speaks of the east and the west and everywhere in between. It means "everywhere."

> He will bless those who honor him, both **young and old**. (Psalm 115:13)

The bolded phrase is merism because it speaks of old people and young people and everyone in between. It means "everyone."

Translation Strategies

If the merism would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are other options:

(1) Identify what the merism refers to without mentioning the parts.
(2) Identify what the merism refers to and include the parts.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Identify what the merism refers to without mentioning the parts.

> I praise you, Father, Lord of **heaven and earth**. (Matthew 11:25b ULT)

> > I praise you, Father, Lord of **everything**.
>
> **From the rising of the sun to its setting**, Yahweh's name should be praised. (Psalm 113:3 ULT)
>
> > **In all places**, people should praise Yahweh's name.

(2) Identify what the merism refers to and include the parts.

> I praise you, Father, Lord of **heaven and earth**. (Matthew 11:25b ULT)
>
> > I praise you, Father, Lord of **everything, including both what is in heaven and what is on earth**.
>
> He will bless those who honor him, both **young and old**. (Psalm 115:13 ULT)
>
> > He will bless **all those** who honor him, regardless of whether they are **young or old**.

"

Referenced in: Exodus 2:12; Exodus 3:15; Exodus 4:10; Exodus 7:19; Exodus 8:3; Exodus 8:5; Exodus 8:9; Exodus 8:11; Exodus 8:13; Exodus 8:21; Exodus 8:24; Exodus 8:29; Exodus 8:31; Exodus 9:3; Exodus 9:25; Exodus 11:5; Exodus 11:6; Exodus 12:29; Exodus 13:10; Exodus 13:15; Exodus 20:4; Exodus 23:25

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: Exodus 1:7; Exodus 1:14; Exodus 2:5; Exodus 3:8; Exodus 3:17; Exodus 4:15; Exodus 4:21; Exodus 4:22; Exodus 4:23; Exodus 4:25; Exodus 5:21; Exodus 6:6; Exodus 6:12; Exodus 6:30; Exodus 7:1; Exodus 7:3; Exodus 7:13; Exodus 7:14; Exodus 7:22; Exodus 8:6; Exodus 8:15; Exodus 8:19; Exodus 8:32; Exodus 9:3; Exodus 9:7; Exodus 9:12; Exodus 9:15; Exodus 9:17; Exodus 9:21; Exodus 9:34; Exodus 9:35; Exodus 10:1; Exodus 10:20; Exodus 10:21; Exodus 10:27; Exodus 11:8; Exodus 11:10; Exodus 12:15; Exodus 12:19; Exodus 13:3; Exodus 13:9; Exodus 13:14; Exodus 13:15; Exodus 14:4; Exodus 14:8; Exodus 14:17; Exodus 14:27; Exodus 15:1; Exodus 15:2; Exodus 15:3; Exodus 15:4; Exodus 15:6; Exodus 15:7; Exodus 15:8; Exodus 15:10; Exodus 15:12; Exodus 15:15; Exodus 15:16; Exodus 15:17; Exodus 15:21; Exodus 16:4; Exodus 16:29; Exodus 17:14; Exodus 18:8; Exodus 18:18; Exodus 18:19; Exodus 18:20; Exodus 18:21; Exodus 18:22; Exodus 18:25; Exodus 18:26; Exodus 19:4; Exodus 19:6; Exodus 19:7; Exodus 19:21; Exodus 19:22; Exodus 19:24; Exodus 20:2; Exodus 20:20; Exodus 23:2; Exodus 23:7; Exodus 23:8; Exodus 23:16; Exodus 23:33; Exodus 28:38; Exodus 30:14; Exodus 30:33; Exodus 30:38; Exodus 31:3; Exodus 31:13; Exodus 31:14; Exodus 31:16; Exodus 32:1; Exodus 32:8; Exodus 32:9; Exodus 32:21; Exodus 33:3; Exodus 33:5; Exodus 33:11; Exodus 33:12; Exodus 33:13; Exodus 33:19; Exodus 33:22; Exodus 34:7; Exodus 34:9; Exodus 34:14; Exodus 34:15; Exodus 34:16; Exodus 34:22; Exodus 35:21; Exodus 35:31; Exodus 35:35; Exodus 36:2; Exodus 40:38

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: Exodus 1:1; Exodus 1:5; Exodus 1:7; Exodus 1:8; Exodus 1:12; Exodus 1:16; Exodus 2:15; Exodus 2:19; Exodus 3:2; Exodus 3:7; Exodus 3:8; Exodus 3:13; Exodus 3:15; Exodus 3:16; Exodus 3:17; Exodus 3:18; Exodus 3:19; Exodus 3:20; Exodus 4:1; Exodus 4:3; Exodus 4:9; Exodus 4:10; Exodus 4:12; Exodus 4:14; Exodus 4:15; Exodus 4:18; Exodus 4:21; Exodus 4:22; Exodus 4:30; Exodus 5:2; Exodus 5:3; Exodus 5:10; Exodus 5:21; Exodus 5:23; Exodus 6:1; Exodus 6:12; Exodus 6:14; Exodus 6:25; Exodus 6:30; Exodus 7:4; Exodus 7:5; Exodus 7:9; Exodus 7:10; Exodus 7:20; Exodus 8:20; Exodus 8:24; Exodus 8:26; Exodus 9:3; Exodus 9:4; Exodus 9:6; Exodus 9:7; Exodus 9:8; Exodus 9:10; Exodus 9:11; Exodus 9:13; Exodus 9:15; Exodus 9:16; Exodus 9:19; Exodus 9:21; Exodus 9:30; Exodus 10:3; Exodus 10:10; Exodus 10:11; Exodus 10:17; Exodus 10:23; Exodus 10:25; Exodus 12:13; Exodus 12:48; Exodus 13:3; Exodus 13:5; Exodus 13:9; Exodus 13:11; Exodus 13:14; Exodus 13:16; Exodus 13:21; Exodus 13:22; Exodus 14:5; Exodus 14:19; Exodus 14:25; Exodus 14:27; Exodus 14:30; Exodus 14:31; Exodus 15:6; Exodus 15:9; Exodus 15:12; Exodus 15:16; Exodus 15:17; Exodus 15:26; Exodus 16:3; Exodus 16:33; Exodus 16:34; Exodus 17:1; Exodus 17:6; Exodus 17:8; Exodus 17:13; Exodus 17:14; Exodus 18:4; Exodus 18:8; Exodus 18:9; Exodus 18:10; Exodus 18:12; Exodus 18:14; Exodus 19:5; Exodus 19:7; Exodus 19:8; Exodus 19:9; Exodus 19:11; Exodus 19:13; Exodus 19:19; Exodus 20:6; Exodus 20:10; Exodus 20:24; Exodus 21:1; Exodus 21:6; Exodus 22:8; Exodus 22:9; Exodus 22:24; Exodus 23:1; Exodus 23:13; Exodus 23:17; Exodus 23:20; Exodus 23:21; Exodus 23:22; Exodus 23:23; Exodus 23:27; Exodus 23:28; Exodus 23:29; Exodus 23:30; Exodus 23:31; Exodus 24:11; Exodus 24:16; Exodus 25:30; Exodus 25:37; Exodus 25:40; Exodus 26:9; Exodus 27:21; Exodus 28:3; Exodus 28:12; Exodus 28:25; Exodus 28:27; Exodus 28:30; Exodus 28:35; Exodus 28:37; Exodus 28:38; Exodus 29:10; Exodus 29:23; Exodus 29:24; Exodus 29:42; Exodus 30:6; Exodus 30:16; Exodus 30:36; Exodus 32:1; Exodus 32:5; Exodus 32:11; Exodus 32:12; Exodus 32:32; Exodus 32:33; Exodus 33:3; Exodus 33:9; Exodus 33:14; Exodus 33:15; Exodus 33:19; Exodus 34:3; Exodus 34:5; Exodus 34:7; Exodus 34:11; Exodus 34:14; Exodus 34:15; Exodus 34:23; Exodus 34:28; Exodus 35:10; Exodus 35:13; Exodus 35:20; Exodus 35:24; Exodus 35:25; Exodus 35:29; Exodus 36:1; Exodus 36:3; Exodus 36:6; Exodus 38:21; Exodus 40:5; Exodus 40:6; Exodus 40:18; Exodus 40:23; Exodus 40:25; Exodus 40:26; Exodus 40:38

Nominal Adjectives

Description

This page answers the question: *How do I translate adjectives that act like nouns?*

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

Parts of Speech (UTA PDF)

In some languages an adjective can be used to refer to a class of things that the adjective describes. When it does, it acts like a noun. For example, the word “rich” is an adjective. Here are two sentences that show that “rich” is an adjective.

> **The rich man** had huge numbers of flocks and herds. (2 Samuel 12:2 ULT)

The adjective “rich” comes before the word “man” and describes “man.”

> **He will not be rich**; his wealth will not last. (Job 15:29a ULT)

The adjective “rich” comes after the verb “be” and describes “He.”

Here is a sentence that shows that “rich” can also function as a noun.

> **The rich** must not give more than the half shekel, and **the poor** must not give less. (Exodus 30:15b ULT)

In Exodus 30:15, the word “rich” acts as a noun in the phrase “the rich,” and it refers to rich people. The word “poor” also acts as a noun and refers to poor people.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Many times in the Bible adjectives are used as nouns to describe a group of people.
- Some languages do not use adjectives in this way.
- Readers of these languages may think that the text is talking about one particular person when it is really talking about the group of people whom the adjective describes.

Examples From the Bible

> The scepter of wickedness must not rule in the land of **the righteous**. (Psalms 125:3a ULT)

“The righteous” here are people who are righteous, not one particular righteous person.

> Blessed are **the meek**. (Matthew 5:5a ULT)

“The meek” here are all people who are meek, not one particular meek person.

Translation Strategies

If your language uses adjectives as nouns to refer to a class of people, consider using the adjectives in this way. If it would sound strange, or if the meaning would be unclear or wrong, here is another option:

(1) Use the adjective with a plural form of the noun that the adjective describes.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use the adjective with a plural form of the noun that the adjective describes.

> The scepter of wickedness must not rule in the land of **the righteous**. (Psalms 125:3a ULT)
>
> > The scepter of wickedness must not rule in the land of **righteous people**.
>
> Blessed are **the meek**. (Matthew 5:5a ULT)
>
> > Blessed are **people who are meek**.

"

Referenced in: Exodus 36:4

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: Exodus 2:2; Exodus 2:16; Exodus 3:18; Exodus 6:16; Exodus 6:18; Exodus 6:20; Exodus 7:7; Exodus 7:25; Exodus 10:22; Exodus 10:23; Exodus 12:37; Exodus 12:40; Exodus 12:41; Exodus 13:6; Exodus 13:7; Exodus 14:7; Exodus 15:27; Exodus 18:21; Exodus 18:25; Exodus 22:1; Exodus 22:30; Exodus 23:10; Exodus 23:12; Exodus 23:14; Exodus 23:15; Exodus 24:1; Exodus 24:4; Exodus 24:16; Exodus 24:18; Exodus 26:7; Exodus 26:8; Exodus 26:16; Exodus 28:9; Exodus 28:10; Exodus 29:35; Exodus 31:15; Exodus 32:28; Exodus 34:18; Exodus 35:2

Order of Events

Description

This page answers the question: *Why are some events not listed in the order they happened, and how do I translate them?*

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

Writing Styles (UTA PDF)

Verbs (UTA PDF)

In the Bible, events are not always told in the order in which they occurred. Sometimes the author wanted to discuss something that happened at an earlier time than the event that he just talked about. This can be confusing to the reader.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Readers might think that the events happened in the order that they are told. It is important to help them understand the correct order of events.

Examples From the Bible

> He even added this to them all: he locked John up in prison. Now it came about, when all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized. (Luke 3:20-21 ULT)

This could sound like John baptized Jesus after John was locked up in prison, but John baptized Jesus before John was locked up in prison.

> Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carrying seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh went forward and blew the trumpets, and the ark of the covenant of Yahweh followed after them. But Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout nor let your voice be heard, nor let any word leave your mouth until the day I tell you to shout. Then you must shout." (Joshua 6:8,10 ULT)

This could sound like Joshua gave the order not to shout after the army had already started their march, but he had given that order before they started marching.

> Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? (Revelation 5:2b ULT)

This sounds like a person must first open the scroll and then break its seals, but the seals that lock the scroll must be broken before the scroll can be unrolled.

Translation Strategies

(1) If your language uses phrases or time words to show that an event happened before one that was already mentioned, consider using one of them.
(2) If your language uses verb tense or aspect to show that an event happened before one that was already mentioned, consider using that. (See the section on "Aspect" of Verbs.)
(3) If your language prefers to tell events in the order that they occurred, consider reordering the events so they they are in that order. This may require putting two or more verses together (like 5-6). (See Verse Bridges.)

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If your language uses phrases, time words or tenses to show that an event happened before the one just mentioned, consider using one of them.

> 20 he even added this to them all: he locked John up in prison. Now it came about, when all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized. (Luke 3:20-21 ULT)

> > 20 But then Herod ... had John locked up in prison. 21 **Before John was put in prison,** while all the people were being baptized by John, Jesus also was baptized.
>
> Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? (Revelation 5:2b ULT)
>
> > Who is worthy to open the scroll **after** breaking its seals?

(2) If your language uses verb tense or aspect to show that an event happened before one that was already mentioned, consider using that.

> Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carrying seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh went forward and blew the trumpets, But Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout nor let your voice be heard, nor let any word leave your mouth until the day I tell you to shout. Then you must shout." (Joshua 6:8,10 ULT)
>
> > 8 Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carried the seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh, as they advanced, they gave a blast on the trumpets 10 But Joshua **had commanded** the people, saying, "Do not shout. No sound must leave your mouths until the day I tell you to shout. Only then must you shout."

(3) If your language prefers to tell events in the order that they occur, consider reordering the events. This may require putting two or more verses together (like 5-6).

> 8 Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carrying seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh went forward and blew the trumpets, But Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout nor let your voice be heard, nor let any word leave your mouth until the day I tell you to shout. Then you must shout." (Joshua 6:8,10 ULT)
>
> > 8,10 Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout. No sound must leave your mouths until the day I tell you to shout. Only then must you shout." Then just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carried the seven trumpets of rams horns before Yahweh, as they advanced, they gave a blast on the trumpets...
>
> Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? (Revelation 5:2b ULT)
>
> > Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_events.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Background Information (UTA PDF)
Connecting Words and Phrases (UTA PDF)
Introduction of a New Event (UTA PDF)
Verse Bridges (UTA PDF)

"

Referenced in: Exodus 33:5

Ordinal Numbers

Description

This page answers the question: *What are ordinal numbers and how can I translate them?*

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

Numbers (UTA PDF)

Ordinal numbers are used in the Bible mainly to tell the position of something in a list.

> And God has indeed appointed some in the church, **first** apostles, **second** prophets, **third** teachers, then miracles. (1 Corinthians 12:28a ULT)

This is a list of workers that God gave to the church in their order.

Ordinal Numbers in English

Most ordinal numbers in English simply have "-th" added to the end.

Numeral	Number	Ordinal Number
4	four	fourth
10	ten	tenth
100	one hundred	one hundredth
1,000	one thousand	one thousandth

Some ordinal numbers in English do not follow that pattern.

Numeral	Number	Ordinal Number
1	one	first
2	two	second
3	three	third
5	five	fifth
12	twelve	twelfth

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not have special numbers for showing the order of items in a list. There are different ways to deal with this.

Examples From the Bible

> The **first** lot went to Jehoiarib, the **second** to Jedaiah, the **third** to Harim, the **fourth** to Seorim ... the **twenty-third** to Delaiah, and the **twenty-fourth** to Maaziah. (1 Chronicles 24:7-18 ULT)

The people cast lots and one went to each of these people in the order given.

> You must place in it four rows of precious stones. The **first** row must have a ruby, a topaz, and a garnet. The **second** row must have an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. The **third** row

> must have a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst. The **fourth** row must have a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper. They must be mounted in gold settings. (Exodus 28:17-20 ULT)

This describes four rows of stones. The first row is probably the top row, and the fourth row is probably the bottom row.

Translation Strategies

If your language has ordinal numbers and using them would give the right meaning, consider using them. If not, here are some strategies to consider:

(1) Use “one” with the first item and “another” or “the next” with the rest.
(2) Tell the total number of items and then list them or the things associated with them.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Tell the total number of items, and use “one” with the first item and “another” or “the next” with the rest.

> The first lot went to Jehoiarib, the second to Jedaiah, the third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim ... the twenty-third to Delaiah, and the twenty-fourth to Maaziah. (1 Chronicles 24:7-18 ULT)
>
> > There were **24** lots. **One lot** went to Jehoiarib, **another** to Jedaiah, **another** to Harim ... **another** to Delaiah, **and the last** went to Maaziah.
> >
> > There were **24** lots. **One lot** went to Jehoiarib, **the next** to Jedaiah, **the next** to Harim ... **the next** to Delaiah, **and the last** went to Maaziah.
>
> A river went out of Eden to water the garden. From there it divided and became **four** rivers. The name of **the first** is Pishon. It is the one which flows throughout the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. The gold of that land is good. There is also bdellium and the onyx stone there. The name of **the second** river is Gihon. This one flows throughout the whole land of Cush. The name of **the third** river is Tigris, which flows east of Asshur. **The fourth** river is the Euphrates. (Genesis 2:10-14 ULT)
>
> > A river went out of Eden to water the garden. From there it divided and became **four** rivers. The name of **one** is Pishon. It is the one which flows throughout the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. The gold of that land is good. There is also bdellium and the onyx stone there. The name of **the next** river is Gihon. This one flows throughout the whole land of Cush. The name of **the next** river is Tigris, which flows east of Asshur. The **last** river is the Euphrates.

(2) Tell the total number of items and then list them or the things associated with them.

> The **first** lot went to Jehoiarib, the **second** to Jedaiah, the **third** to Harim, the **fourth** to Seorim ... the **twenty-third** to Delaiah, and the **twenty-fourth** to Maaziah. (1 Chronicles 24:7-18 ULT)
>
> > They cast **24** lots. The lots went to Jerhoiarib, Jedaiah, Harim, Seorim ... Delaiah, and Maaziah.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Fractions (UTA PDF)

"

Referenced in: Exodus 2:13; Exodus 12:16; Exodus 12:18; Exodus 13:6; Exodus 16:1; Exodus 16:5; Exodus 16:22; Exodus 16:26; Exodus 16:29; Exodus 19:1; Exodus 20:5; Exodus 20:11; Exodus 22:30; Exodus 23:11; Exodus 23:12;

Exodus 24:16; Exodus 26:4; Exodus 28:18; Exodus 28:19; Exodus 28:20; Exodus 31:15; Exodus 34:21; Exodus 35:2; Exodus 40:2; Exodus 40:17

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: Exodus 3:8; Exodus 3:9; Exodus 6:1; Exodus 6:4; Exodus 7:6; Exodus 9:2; Exodus 10:5; Exodus 10:15; Exodus 12:2; Exodus 13:9; Exodus 13:16; Exodus 15:2; Exodus 15:4; Exodus 15:5; Exodus 15:6; Exodus 15:7; Exodus 15:8; Exodus 15:13; Exodus 15:14; Exodus 19:3; Exodus 23:13; Exodus 23:22; Exodus 25:15; Exodus 28:3; Exodus 29:18; Exodus 32:18; Exodus 33:10; Exodus 33:19; Exodus 35:21; Exodus 39:32

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: Exodus 2:23; Exodus 3:9; Exodus 4:8; Exodus 7:12; Exodus 14:3; Exodus 15:7; Exodus 15:8; Exodus 15:12; Exodus 15:14; Exodus 15:15; Exodus 23:8; Exodus 24:10; Exodus 33:22; Exodus 33:23

Poetry

Description

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)

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.

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: Exodus 32:18

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: Exodus 1:9; Exodus 1:11; Exodus 3:1; Exodus 3:7; Exodus 3:8; Exodus 3:18; Exodus 3:21; Exodus 4:27; Exodus 7:16; Exodus 7:19; Exodus 26:33; Exodus 26:34; Exodus 29:37; Exodus 30:10; Exodus 30:29; Exodus 30:36; Exodus 34:10; Exodus 40:10

Pronouns

Description

Pronouns are words that people might use instead of using a noun when referring to someone or something. Some examples are “I,” “you,” “he,” “it,” “this,” “that,” “himself,” “someone,” and others. The personal pronoun is the most common type of pronoun.

This page answers the question: *What are pronouns, and what kinds of pronouns are in some languages?*

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

Parts of Speech (UTA PDF)

Personal Pronouns

Personal pronouns refer to people or things and show whether the speaker is referring to himself, the person he is speaking to, or someone or something else. The following are kinds of information that personal pronouns may provide. Other types of pronouns may give some of this information, as well.

Person

- First Person — The speaker and possibly others (I, me, we, us)
    - Exclusive and Inclusive “We”
- Second Person — The person or people that the speaker is talking to and possibly others (you)
    - Forms of You
- Third Person — Someone or something other than the speaker and those he is talking to (he, she, it, they)

Number

- Singular — one (I, you, he, she, it)
- Plural — more than one (we, you, they)
    - Singular Pronouns that Refer to Groups
- Dual — two (Some languages have pronouns specifically for two people or two things.)

Gender

- Masculine — he
- Feminine — she
- Neuter — it

Relationship to other words in the sentence

- Subject of the verb: I, you, he, she, it, we, they
- Object of the verb or preposition: me, you, him, her, it, us, them
- Possessor with a noun: my, your, his, her, its, our, their
- Possessor without a noun: mine, yours, his, hers, its, ours, theirs

Other Types of pronouns

Reflexive Pronouns refer to another noun or pronoun in the same sentence: myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves.

- John saw **himself** in the mirror. The word “himself” refers to John.

Interrogative Pronouns are used to make a question that needs more than just a yes or no for an answer: what, which, who, whom, whose.

- **Who** built the house?

Relative Pronouns mark a relative clause. The relative pronouns, who, whom, whose, which and that give more information about a noun in the main part of the sentence. Sometimes, the relative adverbs when and where can also be used as relative pronouns.

- I saw the house **that John built**. The clause “that John built” tells which house I saw.
- I saw the man **who built the house**. The clause “who built the house” tells which man I saw.

Demonstrative Pronouns are used to draw attention to someone or something and to show distance from the speaker or something else. The demonstrative pronouns are: this, these, that, and those.

- Have you seen **this** here?
- Who is **that** over there?

Indefinite pronouns are used when no particular noun is being referred to. The indefinite pronouns are: any, anyone, someone, anything, something, and some. Sometimes a personal pronoun is used in a generic way to do this: you, they, he or it.

- He does not want to talk to **anyone**.
- **Someone** fixed it, but I do not know who.
- **They** say that **you** should not wake a sleeping dog.

In the last example, “they” and “you” just refer to people in general.

"

Referenced in: Exodus 4:23

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: Exodus 1:7; Exodus 1:14; Exodus 2:5; Exodus 2:20; Exodus 3:18; Exodus 3:20; Exodus 4:2; Exodus 4:5; Exodus 4:8; Exodus 4:9; Exodus 4:14; Exodus 4:18; Exodus 4:24; Exodus 4:26; Exodus 4:28; Exodus 4:30; Exodus

5:16; Exodus 5:20; Exodus 8:19; Exodus 14:9; Exodus 14:26; Exodus 18:21; Exodus 20:5; Exodus 21:31; Exodus 22:17; Exodus 24:2; Exodus 29:1; Exodus 29:3; Exodus 29:8; Exodus 29:24; Exodus 31:11; Exodus 32:2; Exodus 32:4; Exodus 32:10; Exodus 34:5; Exodus 34:28; Exodus 40:20; Exodus 40:21

Quotations and Quote Margins

Description

This page answers the question: *What are quote margins and where should I put them?*

When saying that someone said something, we often tell who spoke, whom they spoke to, and what they said. The information about who spoke and whom they spoke to is called the quote margin. What the person said is the quotation. (This is also called a quote.) In some languages the quote margin may come first, last, or even in between two parts of the quotation.

The quote margins are bolded below.

- **She said**, "The food is ready. Come and eat."
- "The food is ready. Come and eat," **she said**.
- "The food is ready," **she said.** "Come and eat."

Also in some languages, the quote margin may have more than one verb meaning "said."

> But his mother **answered** and **said**, "No. Rather, he will be called John." (Luke 1:60 ULT)

When writing that someone said something, some languages put the quote (what was said) in quotation marks called inverted commas (" "). Some languages use other symbols around the quotation, such as these angle quote marks (« »), or something else.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Translators need to put the quote margin where it is most clear and natural in their language.
- Translators need to decide whether they want the quote margin to have one or two verbs meaning "said."
- Translators need to decide which marks to use around the quotation.

Examples From the Bible

Quote margin before the quote

> **Then Zechariah said to the angel**, "How will I know this? For I am an old man and my wife is advanced in her days." (Luke 1:18 ULT)
>
> Then tax collectors also came to be baptized, and **they said to him**, "Teacher, what should we do?" (Luke 3:12 ULT)
>
> So **he said to them**, "Collect nothing more than what you have been ordered." (Luke 3:13 ULT)

Quote margin after the quote

> Yahweh relented concerning this. "It will not happen," **he said**. (Amos 7:3 ULT)

Quote margin between two parts of the quote

> "I will hide my face from them," **he said,** "and I will see what their end will be; for they are a perverse generation, children who are unfaithful." (Deuteronomy 32:20 ULT)
>
> For look, days are coming—**this is Yahweh's declaration**—when I will restore the fortunes of my people, Israel and Judah. (Jeremiah 30:3a ULT)

Translation Strategies

(1) Decide where to put the quote margin.
(2) Decide whether to use one or two words meaning "said."

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Decide where to put the quote margin.

> **He said**, "Therefore, those among you who are leaders should go down with us. If there is something wrong with the man, let them accuse him." (Acts 25:5 ULT)
>
> > "Therefore, those who can should go there with us," **he said**. "If there is something wrong with the man, you should accuse him."
> >
> > "Therefore, those who can should go there with us. If there is something wrong with the man, you should accuse him," **he said**.
> >
> > "Therefore, those who can," **he said**, "should go there with us. If there is something wrong with the man, you should accuse him."

(2) Decide whether to use one or two words meaning "said."

> But his mother **answered and said**, "No. Rather, he will be called John." (Luke 1:60 ULT)
>
> > But his mother **replied**, "No. Rather, he will be called John."
> >
> > But his mother **said**, "No. Rather, he will be called John."
> >
> > But his mother **answered** like this. "No. Rather, he will be called John," she **said**.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Direct and Indirect Quotations (UTA PDF)

"

Referenced in: Exodus 33:20; Exodus 33:21; Exodus 34:1

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: , ‘ ’ „ “ ” ‹ › « » ⁊ — .

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: Exodus 1:9; Exodus 2:6; Exodus 2:22; Exodus 3:3; Exodus 3:6; Exodus 3:7; Exodus 3:15; Exodus 3:16; Exodus 3:17; Exodus 3:22; Exodus 4:1; Exodus 4:5; Exodus 4:21; Exodus 4:22; Exodus 4:23; Exodus 4:26; Exodus 5:1; Exodus 5:17; Exodus 6:1; Exodus 7:1; Exodus 7:9; Exodus 7:18; Exodus 8:4; Exodus 8:5; Exodus 8:20; Exodus 8:23; Exodus 9:1; Exodus 9:19; Exodus 10:3; Exodus 11:1; Exodus 12:2; Exodus 13:2; Exodus 14:2; Exodus 25:2; Exodus 30:10; Exodus 31:13; Exodus 31:14; Exodus 32:8

Quotes within Quotes

Description

This page answers the question: *What is a quote within a quote, and how can I help the readers understand who is saying what?*

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

Direct and Indirect Quotations (UTA PDF)

A quotation may have a quote within it, and quotes that are inside of other quotes can also have quotes within them. When a quote has quotes within it, we say there are "layers" of quotation, and each of the quotes is a layer. When there are many layers of quotes inside of quotes, it can be hard for listeners and readers to know who is saying what. Some languages use a combination of direct quotes and indirect quotes to make it easier.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

When there is a quote within a quote, the listener needs to know who the pronouns refer to. For example: if a quote that is inside a quote has the word "I," the listener needs to know whether "I" refers to the speaker of the inner quote or the outer quote.
Some languages make this clear by using different kinds of quotes when there are quotes within quotes.
They may use direct quotes for some and indirect quotes for others.
Some languages do not use indirect quotes.

Examples From the Bible

A quotation with only one layer

> But Paul said, "I, however, was indeed born a citizen." (Acts 22:28b ULT)

Quotations with two layers

> Jesus answered and said to them, "Be careful that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name. They will say, 'I am the Christ,' and will lead many astray." (Matthew 24:4-5 ULT)

The outermost layer is what Jesus said to his disciples. The second layer is what other people will say.

> Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king." (John 18:37b ULT)

The outermost layer is what Jesus said to Pilate. The second layer is what Pilate said about Jesus.

A quotation with three layers

> Abraham said, "... I said to her, 'You must show me this faithfulness as my wife: At every place where we go, say about me, **"He is my brother."**'" (Genesis 20:11a, 13 ULT)

The outermost layer is what Abraham responded to Abimelech. The second layer is what Abraham had told his wife. The third layer is what he wanted his wife to say. (We have bolded the third layer.)

A quotation with four layers

> They said to him, "A man came to meet us who said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, "Yahweh says this: **'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal- Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.'**"'" (2 Kings 1:6 ULT)

The outermost layer is what the messengers said to the king. The second layer is what the man who had met the messengers told them. The third is what that man wanted the messengers to say to the king. The fourth is what Yahweh said. (We have bolded the fourth layer.)

Translation Strategies

Some languages use only direct quotes. Other languages use a combination of direct quotes and indirect quotes. In those languages it might sound strange and perhaps even be confusing if there are many layers of direct quotes.

(1) Translate all of the quotes as direct quotes.
(2) Translate one or some of the quotes as indirect quotes. (See Direct and Indirect Quotations.)

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Translate all of the quotes as direct quotes. In the example below we have bolded the indirect quotes in the ULT and the quotes that we have changed to direct quotes below it.

> Festus presented to the king the things concerning Paul, saying, “There is a certain man was left here as a prisoner by Felix. So I am uncertain about the things concerning this matter. I asked **if he was willing to go to Jerusalem and there to be judged concerning these things**. But when Paul appealed **to keep him in custody for the decision of the emperor**, I ordered him **to be held in custody until when I could send him to Caesar**.” (Acts 25:14b, 20-21 ULT)
>
> > Festus presented Paul’s case to the king. He said, “A certain man was left behind here by Felix as a prisoner. I was uncertain about the things concerning this matter. I asked him, **‘Will you go to Jerusalem to be judged there concerning these things?’** But when Paul said, **‘I want to be kept in custody for the emperor’s decision,’** I told the guard, **‘Keep him in custody until when I can send him to Caesar.’”**

(2) Translate one or some of the quotes as indirect quotes. In English the word “that” can come before indirect quotes. It is bolded in the examples below. The pronouns that changed because of the indirect quote are also bolded.

> And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, “I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel. Speak to them and say, ‘During the evenings you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be satisfied with bread. And you will know that I am Yahweh your God.’” (Exodus 16:11-12 ULT)
>
> > And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, “I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel. Tell them **that** during the evenings **they** will eat meat, and in the morning **they** will be satisfied with bread. And **they** will know that I am Yahweh **their** God.’”
>
> They said to him, “A man came to meet us who said to us, ‘Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, “Yahweh says this: ‘Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.’”” (2 Kings 1:6 ULT)
>
> > They told him **that** a man had come to meet **them** who said to **them**, “Go back to the king who sent you, and tell him **that** Yahweh says this: ‘Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.’”

Quote Markings (UTA PDF)

Next we recommend you learn about:

Quote Markings (UTA PDF)

"

Referenced in: Exodus 3:13; Exodus 3:14; Exodus 3:15; Exodus 3:17; Exodus 4:1; Exodus 4:22; Exodus 5:10; Exodus 7:16; Exodus 7:17; Exodus 8:1; Exodus 9:1; Exodus 12:26; Exodus 13:8; Exodus 13:14; Exodus 16:9; Exodus 19:12; Exodus 19:23; Exodus 32:8; Exodus 32:12; Exodus 32:23; Exodus 32:24; Exodus 33:1

Reflexive Pronouns

This page answers the question: *What are reflexive pronouns?*

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

Pronouns (UTA PDF)

Sentence Structure (UTA PDF)

Description

All languages have ways of showing that the same person fills two different roles in a sentence. English does this by using reflexive pronouns. These are pronouns that refer to someone or something that has already been mentioned in a sentence. In English the reflexive pronouns are: “myself,” “yourself,” “himself,” “herself,” “itself,” “ourselves,” “yourselves,” and “themselves.” In English, these pronouns can also be used to emphasize the person to whom they refer. Other languages may have other ways to do both of these things.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Languages have different ways of showing that the same person fills two different roles in a sentence. For those languages, translators will need to know how to translate the English reflexive pronouns.
- The reflexive pronouns in English also have other functions.

Uses of Reflexive Pronouns

- To show that the same person or things fills two different roles in a sentence
- To emphasize a person or thing in the sentence
- To show that someone or something did something alone or was alone

Examples From the Bible

To show that the same person or thing fills two different roles in a sentence

> If **I** testify about **myself**, my testimony is not true. (John 5:31 ULT)
>
> Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and **many** went up to Jerusalem from the country before the Passover in order to purify **themselves**. (John 11:55 ULT)

To emphasize a person or thing in the sentence

> **Jesus himself** was not baptizing, but his disciples were. (John 4:2 ULT)
>
> So they left the crowd, taking Jesus with them, just as he was, in the boat. There also were other boats with him. Then a violent windstorm arose and the waves were breaking into the boat so that the boat was already full of water. But **Jesus himself** was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. (Mark 4:36-38a ULT)
>
> Then Festus answered that Paul was being held at Caesarea but that **he himself** was about to depart soon. (Acts 25:4 ULT)

To show that someone did something alone, or that something was alone

> When Jesus realized that they were about to come and seize him by force to make him king, he withdrew again up the mountain **by himself**. (John 6:15 ULT)

> He saw the linen cloths lying there and the cloth that had been on his head. **It** was not lying with the linen cloths but was folded up in a place **by itself**. (John 20:6b-7 ULT)

Translation Strategies

If a reflexive pronoun would have the same function in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other strategies.

(1) In some languages people put something on the verb to show that the object of the verb is the same as the subject.
(2) In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by referring to it in a special place in the sentence.
(3) In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by adding something to that word or putting another word with it.
(4) In some languages people show that someone did something alone by using a word like "alone."
(5) In some languages people show that something was alone by using a phrase that tells about where it was.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) In some languages people modify the verb to show that the object of the verb is the same as the subject.

> If I testify about **myself**, my testimony is not true. (John 5:31)
>
> > "If I **self-testify**, my testimony is not true."
>
> Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up to Jerusalem from the country before the Passover in order to **purify themselves**. (John 11:55)
>
> > "Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up to Jerusalem out from country before the Passover in order to **self-purify**."

(2) In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by referring to it in a special place in the sentence.

> **He himself** took our sickness and bore our diseases. (Matthew 8:17 ULT)
>
> > "**The one who** took our sickness and bore our diseases **was Jesus**."
>
> **Jesus himself** was not baptizing, but his disciples were. (John 4:2)
>
> > "**It was not Jesus who** was baptizing, but his disciples."

(3) In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by adding something to that word or putting another word with it.

> But Jesus said this to test Philip, for he **himself** knew what he was going to do. (John 6:6)
>
> > But Jesus said this to test Philip, for, **as for him, he** knew what he was going to do.
>
> Then Festus answered that Paul was being held at Caesarea but that **he himself** was about to depart soon. (Acts 25:4 ULT)
>
> > Then Festus answered that Paul was being held at Caesarea but that, **for his part, he** was about to depart soon.

(4) In some languages people show that someone did something alone by using a word like "alone."

> When Jesus realized that they were about to come and seize him by force to make him king, he withdrew again up the mountain **by himself**. (John 6:15)
>
> > “When Jesus realized that they were about to come and seize him by force to make him king, he withdrew again **alone** up the mountain.”

(5) In some languages people show that something was alone by using a phrase that tells about where it was.

> He saw the linen cloths lying there and the cloth that had been on his head. It was not lying with the linen cloths but was folded up in a place **by itself**. (John 20:6b-7 ULT)
>
> > “He saw the linen cloths lying there and the cloth that had been on his head. It was not lying with the linen cloths but was folded up and lying **in it’s own place**.”

"

Referenced in: Exodus 5:11; Exodus 5:19; Exodus 7:18; Exodus 9:17; Exodus 10:28; Exodus 14:14; Exodus 32:1; Exodus 32:7; Exodus 32:24; Exodus 33:6; Exodus 34:8; Exodus 34:12

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: Exodus 2:14; Exodus 2:20; Exodus 3:11; Exodus 4:11; Exodus 4:14; Exodus 5:4; Exodus 5:14; Exodus 5:22; Exodus 6:12; Exodus 6:30; Exodus 8:26; Exodus 10:7; Exodus 14:5; Exodus 14:11; Exodus 14:12; Exodus 14:15; Exodus 15:11; Exodus 16:7; Exodus 16:8; Exodus 16:28; Exodus 17:2; Exodus 17:3; Exodus 18:14; Exodus 22:27; Exodus 32:11; Exodus 32:12; Exodus 33:16

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: Exodus 4:6; Exodus 4:16; Exodus 15:5; Exodus 15:7; Exodus 15:10; Exodus 15:16; Exodus 16:14; Exodus 19:18; Exodus 24:10; Exodus 24:17; Exodus 33:11; Exodus 34:12

Singular Pronouns that refer to Groups

Description

This page answers the question: *How do I translate singular pronouns that refer to groups of people?*

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

Forms of You (UTA PDF)
Forms of 'You' — Singular (UTA PDF)
Pronouns (UTA PDF)

The Bible was written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. These 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. However, sometimes speakers in the Bible used the singular form of "you" even though they were speaking to a group of people. This is not obvious when you read the Bible in English because English does not have different forms that indicate where "you" is singular and where "you" is plural. But you may see this if you read a Bible in a language that does have distinct forms.

Also, speakers and writers of the Old Testament often referred to groups of people with the singular pronoun "he," rather than with the plural pronoun "they."

Finally, Old Testament speakers and writers sometimes referred to actions that they performed as part of a group by saying 'I' did it when, really, the whole group was involved.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- For many languages, a translator who reads a Bible with a general form of "you" will need to know whether the speaker was speaking to one person or to more than one.
- In some languages, it might be confusing if a speaker uses a singular pronoun when speaking to or about more than one person.

Examples From the Bible

> 1 Now take heed that **you** do not do **your** acts of righteousness before people to be seen by them, otherwise **you** will not have a reward with **your** Father who is in heaven. 2 So when **you** give alms, do not sound a trumpet before **yourself** as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may have the praise of people. Truly I say to **you**, they have received their reward. (Matthew 6:1-2 ULT)

Jesus said this to a crowd. He used "you" plural in verse 1, and "you" singular in the first sentence of verse 2. Then, in the last sentence, he used the plural again.

> God spoke all these words: "I am Yahweh, **your** God, who brought **you** out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. **You** must have no other gods before me." (Exodus 20:1-3 ULT)

God said this to all the people of Israel. He had taken them all out of Egypt and he wanted them all to obey him, but he used the singular form of you here when speaking to them.

> This is what Yahweh says, "For three sins of Edom, even for four, I will not turn away punishment, because **he** pursued **his** brother with the sword and cast off all pity. **His** anger raged continually, and **his** wrath lasted forever." (Amos 1:11 ULT)

Yahweh said these things about the nation of Edom, not about only one person.

> And I arose in the night, myself and a few men with me. And I was going up by the wadi at night, and I was looking intently at the wall. And I turned back, and I entered by the gate of the valley, and I returned. (Nehemiah 2:12a,15 ULT)

Nehemiah makes clear that he brought other people with him on his inspection tour of the wall of Jerusalem. But as he describes the tour, he just says "I" did this and that.

Translation Strategies

If the singular form of the pronoun would be natural when referring to a group of people, consider using it.

(1) If using the singular form of the pronoun when referring to a group of people would not be natural in your language, use the plural form of the pronoun.

- Whether you can use use the singular form of the pronoun may depend on who the speaker is and who the people are that he is talking about or talking to.
- It may also depend on what the speaker is saying.

Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If using the singular form of the pronoun when referring to a group of people would not be natural in your language, use the plural form of the pronoun.

> This is what Yahweh says, "For three sins of Edom, even for four, I will not turn away punishment, because **he** pursued **his** brother with the sword and cast off all pity. **His** anger raged continually, and **his** wrath lasted forever." (Amos 1:11 ULT)
>
> > This is what Yahweh says, "For three sins of Edom, even for four, I will not turn away punishment, because **they** pursued **their brothers** with the sword and cast off all pity. **Their** anger raged continually, and **their** wrath lasted forever."
>
> And I arose in the night, myself and a few men with me. And **I** was going up by the wadi at night, and **I** was looking intently at the wall. And **I** turned back, and **I** entered by the gate of the valley, and **I** returned. (Nehemiah 2:12a,15 ULT)
>
> > And I arose in the night, myself and a few men with me. ... And **we** were going up by the wadi at night and **we** were looking intently at the wall. And **we** turned back and **we** entered by the gate of the valley, and **we** returned.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural (UTA PDF)

"

Referenced in: Exodus 12:24; Exodus 12:46; Exodus 12:48; Exodus 16:28; Exodus 20 Chapter Introduction

Symbolic Action

Description

This page answers the question: *What is a symbolic action and how do I translate it?*

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

Translate Unknowns (UTA PDF)

A symbolic action is something that someone does in order to express a certain idea. For example, in some cultures people nod their heads up and down to mean “yes” or turn their heads from side to side to mean “no.” Symbolic actions do not mean the same things in all cultures. In the Bible, sometimes people perform symbolic actions and sometimes they only refer to the symbolic action.

Examples of symbolic actions

- In some cultures people shake hands when they meet to show that they are willing to be friendly.
- In some cultures people bow when they meet to show respect to each other.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

An action may have a meaning in one culture and a different meaning or no meaning at all in another culture. For example, in some cultures raising the eyebrows means “I am surprised” or “What did you say?” In other cultures it means “yes.”

In the Bible, people did things that had certain meanings in their culture. When we read the Bible, we might not understand what someone meant if we interpret the action based on what it means in our own culture today.

You (the translator) need to understand what people in the Bible meant when they used symbolic actions. If an action does not mean the same thing in your own culture, then you need to figure out how to translate what the action meant.

Examples From the Bible

> And behold, a man came whose name was Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. And **falling at the feet of Jesus**, he begged him to come to his house. (Luke 8:41 ULT)

Meaning of symbolic action: He did this to show great respect to Jesus.

> Look, I am standing at the door and am knocking. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into him and will eat with him, and he with me. (Revelation 3:20 ULT)

Meaning of symbolic action: When people wanted someone to welcome them into their home, they stood at the door and knocked on it.

Translation Strategies

If people would correctly understand what a symbolic action meant to the people in the Bible, consider using it. If not, here are some strategies for translating it.

(1) Tell what the person did and why he did it.
(2) Do not tell what the person did, but tell what he meant.
(3) Use an action from your own culture that has the same meaning. Do this only in poetry, parables, and sermons. Do not do this when there actually was a person who did a specific action.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Tell what the person did and why he did it.

> And **falling at the feet of Jesus** (Luke 8:41 ULT)
>
> > Jairus fell down at Jesus' feet in order to show that he greatly respected him.
>
> Look, I am **standing at the door and am knocking**. (Revelation 3:20 ULT)
>
> > Look, I stand at the door and knock on it, asking you to let me in.

(2) Do not tell what the person did, but tell what he meant.

> And **falling at the feet of Jesus** (Luke 8:41 ULT)
>
> > Jairus showed Jesus great respect.
>
> Look, I am **standing at the door and am knocking**. (Revelation 3:20 ULT)
>
> > Look, I stand at the door and ask you to let me in.

(3) Use an action from your own culture that has the same meaning.

> And **falling at the feet of Jesus** (Luke 8:41 ULT) — Since Jairus actually did this, you should not substitute an action from your own culture.
>
> Look, I am **standing at the door and am knocking**. (Revelation 3:20 ULT) — Jesus was not standing at a real door. Rather he was speaking about wanting to have a relationship with people. So in cultures where it is polite to clear one's throat when wanting to be let into a house, you could use that.
>
> > Look, I stand at the door and clear my throat.

"

Referenced in: Exodus 4:27; Exodus 4:31; Exodus 6:8; Exodus 9:29; Exodus 9:33; Exodus 11:8; Exodus 18:7; Exodus 18:13; Exodus 29:24; Exodus 29:26; Exodus 29:27; Exodus 34:14

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: Exodus 1:19; Exodus 2:20; Exodus 3:18; Exodus 4:13; Exodus 5:14; Exodus 6:6; Exodus 6:7; Exodus 8:6; Exodus 8:19; Exodus 9:14; Exodus 10:26; Exodus 10:28; Exodus 10:29; Exodus 12:23; Exodus 14:10; Exodus 17:10; Exodus 17:11; Exodus 27:21; Exodus 34:15; Exodus 35:21; Exodus 35:22; Exodus 35:26; Exodus 35:29; Exodus 35:35; Exodus 36:1; Exodus 36:8

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: Exodus 8:23

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: Exodus 1:14; Exodus 2:3; Exodus 2:16; Exodus 4:25; Exodus 5:8; Exodus 5:12; Exodus 6:26; Exodus 7:22; Exodus 8:7; Exodus 8:16; Exodus 8:17; Exodus 8:18; Exodus 8:19; Exodus 8:21; Exodus 8:22; Exodus 8:24; Exodus 8:29; Exodus 8:31; Exodus 9:9; Exodus 9:10; Exodus 9:11; Exodus 9:31; Exodus 9:32; Exodus 12:17; Exodus 12:22; Exodus 12:41; Exodus 12:51; Exodus 14:24; Exodus 15:20; Exodus 16:13; Exodus 16:14; Exodus 16:31; Exodus 22:6; Exodus 23:11; Exodus 23:28; Exodus 24:7; Exodus 24:10; Exodus 25:4; Exodus 25:5; Exodus 25:6; Exodus 25:7; Exodus 25:10; Exodus 25:12; Exodus 25:13; Exodus 25:29; Exodus 25:33; Exodus 26:1; Exodus 26:11; Exodus 26:14; Exodus 26:15; Exodus 26:17; Exodus 26:25; Exodus 26:26; Exodus 26:33; Exodus 26:36; Exodus 27:9; Exodus 27:19; Exodus 28:4; Exodus 28:5; Exodus 28:6; Exodus 28:9; Exodus 28:11; Exodus 28:13; Exodus 28:17; Exodus 28:18; Exodus 28:19; Exodus 28:20; Exodus 28:21; Exodus 28:22; Exodus 28:27; Exodus 28:30; Exodus 28:32; Exodus 28:33; Exodus 28:36; Exodus 28:37; Exodus 28:39; Exodus 28:40; Exodus 28:42; Exodus 29:2; Exodus 29:5; Exodus 29:6; Exodus 29:7; Exodus 29:9; Exodus 29:12; Exodus 29:13; Exodus 29:17; Exodus 29:22; Exodus 30:2; Exodus 30:18; Exodus 30:23; Exodus 30:24; Exodus 30:25; Exodus 30:34; Exodus 32:4; Exodus 33:4; Exodus 35:6; Exodus 35:7; Exodus 35:8; Exodus 35:9

Verse Bridges

Description

This page answers the question: *Why are some verse numbers combined in the UST, such as "3-5" or "17-18"?*

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

Structure of the Bible (UTA PDF)

In some cases, you will see in the unfoldingWord® Simplified Text (UST) that two or more verse numbers are combined, such as 17-18. This is called a verse bridge. This means that the information in the verses was rearranged so that the story or message could be more easily understood.

> 29 These were the clans of the Horites: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, and Anah, 30 Dishon, Ezer, Dishan: these are clans of the Horites, according to their clan lists in the land of Seir. (Genesis 36:29-30 ULT)
>
> 29-30 The people groups who were descendants of Hor lived in Seir land. The names of the people groups are Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. (Genesis 36:29-30 UST)

In the ULT text, verses 29 and 30 are separate, and the information about the people living in Seir is at the end of verse 30. In the UST text, the verses are joined, and the information about them living in Seir is at the beginning. For many languages, this is a more logical order of information.

Examples From the Bible

Where the UST has a verse bridge, the ULT will have separate verses.

> 4-5 Yahweh our God will bless you in the land that he is giving to you. If you obey Yahweh our God and obey all the commandments that I am giving to you today, there will not be any poor people among you. (Deuteronomy 15:4-5 UST)
>
> 4 However, there should be no poor among you (for Yahweh will surely bless you in the land that he gives you as an inheritance to possess), 5 if only you diligently listen to the voice of Yahweh your God, to keep all these commandments that I am commanding you today. (Deuteronomy 15:4-5 ULT)
>
> 16-17 But Yahweh said to him, "I will not permit you to eat the fruit of the tree that will enable you to know what actions are good to do and what actions are evil to do. If you eat any fruit from that tree, on the day you eat it you will surely die. But I will permit you to eat the fruit of any of the other trees in the park." (Genesis 2:16-17 UST)
>
> 16 Yahweh God commanded the man, saying, "From every tree in the garden you may freely eat. 17 But from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you may not eat, for on the day that you eat from it, you will surely die." (Genesis 2:16-17 ULT)

Translation Strategies

Order the information in a way that will be clear to your readers. If the order of information is clear as it is in the ULT, then use that order. But if the order is confusing or gives the wrong meaning, then change the order so that it is more clear.

(1) If you put information from one verse before information from an earlier verse, then combine the verses and put a hyphen between the two verse numbers.

See how to mark verses in translationStudio.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If information from one verse is put before information from an earlier verse, then combine the verses and put the verse numbers before the first verse with a hyphen between them.

> 2 You must select three cities for yourself in the middle of your land that Yahweh your God is giving you to possess. 3 You must build a road and divide the borders of your land into three parts, the land that Yahweh your God is causing you to inherit, so that everyone who kills another person may flee there. (Deuteronomy 19:2-3 ULT)
>
> 2-3 You must divide into three parts the land that he is giving to you. Then select a city in each part. You must make good roads in order that people can get to those cities easily. Someone who kills another person can escape to one of those cities to be safe. (Deuteronomy 19:2-3 UST)

Next we recommend you learn about:

Chapter and Verse Numbers (UTA PDF)

"

Referenced in: Exodus 33:4

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: Exodus 8:17; Exodus 8:18; Exodus 9:9; Exodus 9:10; Exodus 9:19; Exodus 9:22; Exodus 9:25; Exodus 10:7; Exodus 10:23; Exodus 12:4; Exodus 12:22; Exodus 12:24; Exodus 12:26; Exodus 33:4; Exodus 35:21; Exodus 35:22; Exodus 35:23; Exodus 36:1; Exodus 36:4

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.

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Referenced in: Exodus 4:20

unfoldingWord® Translation Words

Version 86

atonement, atone, atoned

Definition:

The terms “atone” and “atonement” refer to how God provided a sacrifice to pay for people’s sins and to appease his wrath for sin.

- In Old Testament times, God allowed temporary atonement to be made for the sins of the Israelites by the offering of a blood sacrifice, which involved killing an animal.
- As recorded in the New Testament, Christ’s death on the cross is the only true and permanent atonement for sin.
- When Jesus died, he took the punishment that people deserve because of their sin. He paid the atonement price with his sacrificial death.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “atone” could be translated by a word or phrase that means “pay for” or “provide payment for” or “cause someone’s sins to be forgiven” or “make amends for a crime.”
- Ways to translate “atonement” could include “payment” or “sacrifice to pay for sin” or “providing the means of forgiveness.”
- Make sure the translation of this term does not refer to payment of money.

(See also: atonement lid, forgive, propitiation, reconcile, redeem)

Bible References:

- Ezekiel 43:25-27
- Ezekiel 45:18-20
- Leviticus 4:20
- Numbers 5:8
- Numbers 28:22

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3722, H3725, G26430

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Referenced in: Exodus 30 General Notes

circumcise, circumcised, circumcision, uncircumcised, uncircumcision

Definition:

The term “circumcise” means to cut off the foreskin of a man or male child. A circumcision ceremony may be performed in connection with this.

- God commanded Abraham to circumcise every male among his family and servants as a sign of God’s covenant with them.
- God also commanded Abraham’s descendants to continue to do this for every baby boy born into their households.
- The phrase, “circumcision of the heart” refers figuratively to the “cutting away” or removal of sin from a person.
- In a spiritual sense, “the circumcised” refers to people whom God has purified from sin through the blood of Jesus and who are his people.
- The term “uncircumcised” refers to those who have not been circumcised physically. It can also refer figuratively to those who have not been circumcised spiritually, who do not have a relationship with God.

The terms “uncircumcised” and “uncircumcision” refer to a male who has not been physically circumcised. These terms are also used figuratively.

- Egypt was a nation that also required circumcision. So when God talks about Egypt being defeated by the “uncircumcised,” he is referring to people whom the Egyptians despised for not being circumcised.
- The Bible refers to people who have an “uncircumcised heart” or who are “uncircumcised in heart.” This a figurative way of saying that these people are not God’s people, and are stubbornly disobedient to him.
- If a word for circumcision is used or known in the language, “uncircumcised” could be translated as “not circumcised.”
- The expression “the uncircumcision” could be translated as “people who are not circumcised” or “people who do not belong to God,” depending on the context.
- Other ways to translate figurative senses of this term could include “not God’s people” or “rebellious like those who don’t belong to God” or “people who have no sign of belonging to God.”
- The expression “uncircumcised in heart” could be translated as “stubbornly rebellious” or “refusing to believe.” However, if possible it is best to keep the expression or a similar one since spiritual circumcision is an important concept.

Translation Suggestions:

- If the culture of the target language performs circumcisions on males, the word used to refer to this should be used for this term.
- Other ways to translate this term would be, “cut around” or “cut in a circle” or “cut off the foreskin.”
- In cultures where circumcision is not known, it may be necessary to explain it in a footnote or glossary.
- Make sure the term used to translate this does not refer to females. It may be necessary to translate this with a word or phrase that includes the meaning of “male.”

(See also: How to Translate Unknowns)

(See also: Abraham, covenant)

Bible References:

- Genesis 17:11
- Genesis 17:14
- Exodus 12:48

- Leviticus 26:41
- Joshua 5:3
- Judges 15:18
- 2 Samuel 1:20
- Jeremiah 9:26
- Ezekiel 32:25
- Acts 10:44-45
- Acts 11:3
- Acts 15:1
- Acts 11:3
- Romans 2:27
- Galatians 5:3
- Ephesians 2:11
- Philippians 3:3
- Colossians 2:11
- Colossians 2:13

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **5:3** “You must **circumcise** every male in your family.”
- **5:5** That day Abraham **circumcised** all the males in his household.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H4135, H4139, H5243, H6188, H6189, H6190, G02030, G05640, G19860, G40590, G40610

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Referenced in: Exodus 4 Chapter Introduction

covenant

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “covenant” refers to a formal, binding agreement between two parties that one or both parties must fulfill.

- This agreement can be between individuals, between groups of people, or between God and people.
- When people make a covenant with each other, they promise that they will do something, and they must do it.
- Examples of human covenants include marriage covenants, business agreements, and treaties between countries.
- Throughout the Bible, God made several different covenants with his people.
- In some of the covenants, God promised to fulfill his part without conditions. For example, when God established his covenant with mankind promising to never destroy the earth again with a worldwide flood, this promise had no conditions for people to fulfill.
- In other covenants, God promised to fulfill his part only if the people obeyed him and fulfilled their part of the covenant.

The term “new covenant” refers to the commitment or agreement God made with his people through the sacrifice of his Son, Jesus.

- God’s “new covenant” was explained in the part of the Bible called the “New Testament.”
- This new covenant is in contrast to the “old” or “former” covenant that God had made with the Israelites in Old Testament times.
- The new covenant is better than the old one because it is based on the sacrifice of Jesus, which completely atoned for people’s sins forever. The sacrifices made under the old covenant did not do this.
- God writes the new covenant on the hearts those who become believers in Jesus. This causes them to want to obey God and to begin to live holy lives.
- The new covenant will be completely fulfilled in the end times when God establishes his reign on earth. Everything will once again be very good, as it was when God first created the world.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, ways to translate this term could include, “binding agreement” or “formal commitment” or “pledge” or “contract.”
- Some languages may have different words for covenant depending on whether one party or both parties have made a promise they must keep. If the covenant is one-sided, it could be translated as “promise” or “pledge.”
- Make sure the translation of this term does not sound like people proposed the covenant. In all cases of covenants between God and people, it was God who initiated the covenant.
- The term “new covenant” could be translated as “new formal agreement” or “new pact” or “new contract.”
- The word “new” in these expressions has the meaning of “fresh” or “new kind of” or “another.”

(See also: covenant, promise)

Bible References:

- Genesis 9:12
- Genesis 17:7
- Genesis 31:44
- Exodus 34:10-11
- Joshua 24:24-26

- 2 Samuel 23:5
- 2 Kings 18:11-12
- Mark 14:24
- Luke 1:73
- Luke 22:20
- Acts 7:8
- 1 Corinthians 11:25-26
- 2 Corinthians 3:6
- Galatians 3:17-18
- Hebrews 12:24

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **4:9** Then God made a **covenant** with Abram. A **covenant** is an agreement between two parties.
- **5:4** “I will make Ishmael a great nation, too, but my **covenant** will be with Isaac.”
- **6:4** After a long time, Abraham died and all of the promises that God had made to him in the **covenant** were passed on to Isaac.
- **7:10** “The **covenant** promises God had promised to Abraham and then to Isaac now passed on to Jacob.”
- **13:2** God said to Moses and the people of Israel, “If you will obey my voice and keep my **covenant**, you will be my prized possession, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.”
- **13:4** Then God gave them the **covenant** and said, “I am Yahweh, your God, who saved you from slavery in Egypt. Do not worship other gods.”
- **15:13** Then Joshua reminded the people of their obligation to obey the **covenant** that God had made with the Israelites at Sinai.
- **21:5** Through the prophet Jeremiah, God promised that he would make a **New Covenant**, but not like the covenant God made with Israel at Sinai. In the **New Covenant**, God would write his law on the people’s hearts, the people would know God personally, they would be his people, and God would forgive their sins. The Messiah would start the **New Covenant**.
- **21:14** Through the Messiah’s death and resurrection, God would accomplish his plan to save sinners and start the **New Covenant**.
- **38:5** Then Jesus took a cup and said, “Drink this. It is my blood of the **New Covenant** that is poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Do this to remember me every time you drink it.”
- **48:11** But God has now made a **New Covenant** that is available to everyone. Because of this **New Covenant**, anyone from any people group can become part of God’s people by believing in Jesus.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1285, H2319, H3772, G08020, G12420, G49340

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Referenced in: Exodus 16 Chapter Introduction

firstborn

Definition:

The term “firstborn” refers to an offspring of people or animals that is born first, before the other offspring are born.

- In the Bible, “firstborn” usually refers to the first male offspring that is born.
- In Bible times, the firstborn son was given a place of prominence and twice as much of his family inheritance as the other sons.
- Often it was the firstborn male of an animal that was sacrificed to God.
- This concept can also be used figuratively. For example, the nation of Israel is called God’s firstborn son because God gave it special privileges over other nations.
- Jesus, the Son of God is called God’s firstborn because of his importance and authority over everyone else.

Translation Suggestions:

- When “first-born” occurs in the text alone, it could also be translated as “firstborn male” or “firstborn son,” since that is what is implied. (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)
- Other ways to translate this term could include “the son who was born first” or “the eldest son” or “the number one son.”
- When used figuratively to refer to Jesus, this could be translated with a word or phrase that means “the son who has authority over everything” or “the Son who is first in honor.”
- Caution: Make sure the translation of this term in reference to Jesus does not imply that he was created.

(See also: inherit, sacrifice, son)

Bible References:

- Colossians 1:15
- Genesis 4:3-5
- Genesis 29:26-27
- Genesis 43:33
- Luke 2:6-7
- Revelation 1:5

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1060, H1062, H1067, H1069, G44160, G52070

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Referenced in: Exodus 4 Chapter Introduction

godly, godliness, ungodly, godless, ungodliness, godlessness

Definition:

The term “godly” is used to describe a person who acts in a way that honors God and shows what God is like. “Godliness” is the character quality of honoring God by doing his will.

- A person who has godly character will show the fruits of the Holy Spirit, such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and self control.
- The quality of godliness shows that a person has the Holy Spirit and is obeying him.

The terms “ungodly” and “godless” describe people who are in rebellion against God. Living in an evil way, without thought of God, is called “ungodliness” or “godlessness.”

- The meanings of these words are very similar. However, “godless” and “godlessness” may describe a more extreme condition in which people or nations do not even acknowledge God or his right to rule them.
- God pronounces judgment and wrath on ungodly people, on everyone who rejects him and his ways.

Translation Suggestions:

- The phrase “the godly” could be translated as “godly people” or “people who obey God.” (See: nominaladj)
- The adjective “godly” could be translated as “obedient to God” or “righteous” or “pleasing to God.”
- The phrase “in a godly manner” could be translated as “in a way that obeys God” or “with actions and words that please God.”
- Ways to translate “godliness” could include “acting in a way that pleases God” or “obeying God” or “living in a righteous manner.”
- Depending on the context, the term “ungodly” could be translated as “displeasing to God” or “immoral” or “disobeying God.”
- The terms “godless” and “godlessness” literally mean that the people are “without God” or “having no thought of God” or “acting in a way that does not acknowledge God.”
- Other ways to translate “ungodliness” or “godlessness” could be “wickedness” or “evil” or “rebellion against God”.

(See also evil, honor, obey, righteous)

Bible References:

- Job 27:10
- Proverbs 11:9
- Acts 3:12
- 1 Timothy 1:9-11
- 1 Timothy 4:7
- 2 Timothy 3:12
- Hebrews 12:14-17
- Hebrews 11:7
- 1 Peter 4:18
- Jude 1:16

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0430, H1100, H2623, H5760, H7563, G05160, G07630, G07640, G07650, G21240, G21500, G21520, G21530, G23160, G23170

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Referenced in: Exodus 18 Chapter Introduction

holy, holiness, unholy, sacred

Definition:

The terms “holy” and “holiness” refer to the character of God that is totally set apart and separated from everything that is sinful and imperfect.

- Only God is absolutely holy. He makes people and things holy.
- A person who is holy belongs to God and has been set apart for the purpose of serving God and bringing him glory.
- An object that God has declared to be holy is one that he has set apart for his glory and use, such as an altar that is for the purpose of offering sacrifices to him.
- People cannot approach him unless he allows them to, because he is holy and they are merely human beings, sinful and imperfect.
- In the Old Testament, God set apart the priests as holy for special service to him. They had to be ceremonially cleansed from sin in order to approach God.
- God also set apart as holy certain places and things that belonged to him or in which he revealed himself, such as his temple.

Literally, the term “unholy” means “not holy.” It describes someone or something that does not honor God.

- This word is used to describe someone who dishonors God by rebelling against him.
- A thing that is called “unholy” could be described as being common, profane or unclean. It does not belong to God.

The term “sacred” describes something that relates to worshiping God or to the pagan worship of false gods.

- In the Old Testament, the term “sacred” was often said to describe the stone pillars and other objects used in the worship of false gods. This could also be translated as “religious.”
- “Sacred songs” and “sacred music” refer to music that was sung or played for God’s glory. This could be translated as “music for worshiping Yahweh” or “songs that praise God.”
- The phrase “sacred duties” referred to the “religious duties” or “rituals” that a priest performed to lead people in worshiping God. It could also refer to the rituals performed by a pagan priest to worship a false god

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “holy” might include “set apart for God” or “belonging to God” or “completely pure” or “perfectly sinless” or “separated from sin.”
- To “make holy” is often translated as “sanctify” in English. It could also be translated as “set apart (someone) for God’s glory.”
- Ways to translate “unholy” could include “not holy” or “not belonging to God” or “not honoring to God” or “not godly.”
- In some contexts, “unholy” could be translated as “unclean.”

(See also: Holy Spirit, consecrate, sanctify, set apart)

Bible References:

- Genesis 28:22
- 2 Kings 3:2
- Lamentations 4:1
- Ezekiel 20:18-20
- Matthew 7:6

- Mark 8:38
- Acts 7:33
- Acts 11:8
- Romans 1:2
- 2 Corinthians 12:3-5
- Colossians 1:22
- 1 Thessalonians 3:13
- 1 Thessalonians 4:7
- 2 Timothy 3:15

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **1:16** He (God) blessed the seventh day and made it **holy**, because on this day he rested from his work.
- **9:12** “You are standing on **holy** ground.”
- **13:2** “If you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my prized possession, a kingdom of priests, and a **holy** nation.”
- **13:5** “Always be sure to keep the Sabbath day **holy**.”
- **22:5** “So the baby will be **holy**, the Son of God.”
- **50:2** As we wait for Jesus to return, God wants us to live in a way that is **holy** and that honors him.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0430, H2455, H2623, H4676, H4720, H6918, H6922, H6942, H6944, H6948, G00370, G00380, G00400, G00400, G00410, G00420, G04620, G18590, G21500, G24120, G24130, G28390, G37410, G37420

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Referenced in: Exodus 12 Chapter Introduction; Exodus 19 Chapter Introduction; Exodus 24 Chapter Introduction; Exodus 29 Chapter Introduction; Exodus 30 General Notes; Exodus 39 General Notes

law, law of Moses, law of Yahweh, law of God

Definition:

Most simply, the term “law” refers to a rule or instruction that should be followed. In the Bible, the term “law” is often used generally to refer to anything and everything God wants his people to obey and do. The specific term “law of Moses” refers to the commandments and instructions that God gave Moses for the Israelites to obey.

- Depending on the context, the “law” can refer to:
  - the Ten Commandments that God wrote on stone tablets for the Israelites
  - all the laws given to Moses
  - the first five books of the Old Testament
  - the entire Old Testament (also referred to as “scriptures” in the New Testament).
  - all of God’s instructions and will
- The phrase “the Law and the Prophets” is used in the New Testament to refer to the Hebrew scriptures (or “Old Testament”)

Translation Suggestions:

- These terms could be translated using the plural, “laws,” since they refer to many instructions.
- The term “law of Moses” could be translated as “the laws that God told Moses to give to the Israelites.”
- Depending on the context, “the law of Moses” could also be translated as “the law that God told to Moses” or “God’s laws that Moses wrote down” or “the laws that God told Moses to give to the Israelites.”
- Ways to translate “the law” or “law of God” or “God’s laws” could include “laws from God” or “God’s commands” or “laws that God gave” or “everything that God commands” or “all of God’s instructions.”
- The phrase “law of Yahweh” could also be translated as “Yahweh’s laws” or “laws that Yahweh said to obey” or “laws from Yahweh” or “things Yahweh commanded.”

(See also: instruct, Moses, Ten Commandments, lawful, Yahweh)

Bible References:

- Acts 15:6
- Daniel 9:13
- Exodus 28:42-43
- Ezra 7:25-26
- Galatians 2:15
- Luke 24:44
- Matthew 5:18
- Nehemiah 10:29
- Romans 3:20

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **13:7** God also gave many other **laws** and rules to follow. If the people obeyed these **laws**, God promised that he would bless and protect them. If they disobeyed them, God would punish them.
- **13:9** Anyone who disobeyed **God’s law** could bring an animal to the altar in front of the Tent of Meeting as a sacrifice to God.
- **15:13** Then Joshua reminded the people of their obligation to obey the covenant that God had made with the Israelites at Sinai. The people promised to remain faithful to God and follow **his laws**.
- **16:1** After Joshua died, the Israelites disobeyed God and did not drive out the rest of the Canaanites or obey **God’s laws**.

- **21:5** In the New Covenant, God would write **his law** on the people's hearts, the people would know God personally, they would be his people, and God would forgive their sins.
- **27:1** Jesus answered, "What is written in **God's law**?"
- **28:1** Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me 'good?' There is only one who is good, and that is God. But if you want to have eternal life, obey **God's laws**."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0430, H1881, H1882, H2706, H2710, H3068, H4687, H4872, H4941, H8451, G23160, G35510, G35650

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Referenced in: Exodus 15 Chapter Introduction; Exodus 19 Chapter Introduction; Exodus 31 General Notes

Passover

Facts:

The “Passover” is the name of a religious festival that the Jews celebrate every year, to remember how God rescued their ancestors, the Israelites, from slavery in Egypt.

- The name of this festival comes from the fact that God “passed over” the houses of the Israelites and did not kill their sons when he killed the firstborn sons of the Egyptians.
- The Passover celebration includes a special meal of a perfect lamb that they have killed and roasted, as well as bread made without yeast. These foods remind them of the meal that the Israelites ate the night before they escaped from Egypt.
- God told the Israelites to eat this meal every year in order to remember and celebrate how God “passed over” their houses and how he set them free from slavery in Egypt.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “Passover” could be translated by combining the words “pass” and “over” or another combination of words that has this meaning.
- It is helpful if the name of this festival has a clear connection to the words used to explain what the angel of the Lord did in passing by the houses of the Israelites and sparing their sons.

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 5:7
- 2 Chronicles 30:13-15
- 2 Kings 23:23
- Deuteronomy 16:2
- Exodus 12:26-28
- Ezra 6:21-22
- John 13:1
- Joshua 5:10-11
- Leviticus 23:4-6
- Numbers 9:3

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **12:14** God commanded the Israelites to remember his victory over the Egyptians and their deliverance from slavery by celebrating the **Passover** every year.
- **38:1** Every year, the Jews celebrated the **Passover**. This was a celebration of how God had saved their ancestors from slavery in Egypt many centuries earlier.
- **38:4** Jesus celebrated the **Passover** with his disciples.
- **48:9** When God saw the blood, he passed over their houses and did not kill their firstborn sons. This event is called the **Passover**.
- **48:10** Jesus is our **Passover** Lamb. He was perfect and sinless and was killed at the time of the **Passover** celebration.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H6453, G39570

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Referenced in: Introduction to Exodus; Exodus 12 Chapter Introduction

Sabbath

Definition:

The term “Sabbath” refers to the seventh day of the week, which God commanded the Israelites to set apart as a day of rest and doing no work.

- After God finished creating the world in six days, he rested on the seventh day. In the same way, God commanded the Israelites to set aside the seventh day as a special day to rest and worship him.
- The command to “keep the Sabbath holy” is one of the ten commandments that God wrote on the stone tablets that he gave Moses for the Israelites.
- Following the Jewish system of counting days, the Sabbath begins on Friday at sundown and lasts until Saturday at sundown.
- Sometimes in the Bible the Sabbath is called “Sabbath day” rather than only the Sabbath.

Translation Suggestions:

- This could also be translated as “resting day” or “day for resting” or “day of not working” or “God’s day of rest.”
- Some translations capitalize this term to show that it is a special day, as in “Sabbath Day” or “Resting Day.”
- Consider how this term is translated in a local or national language.

(See also: How to Translate Unknowns)

(See also: rest)

Bible References:

- 2 Chronicles 31:2-3
- Acts 13:26-27
- Exodus 31:14
- Isaiah 56:6-7
- Lamentations 2:6
- Leviticus 19:3
- Luke 13:14
- Mark 2:27
- Matthew 12:2
- Nehemiah 10:32-33

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **13:5** “Always be sure to keep the **Sabbath day** holy. That is, do all your work in six days, for the seventh day is a day for you to rest and to honor me.”
- **26:2** Jesus went to the town of Nazareth where he had lived during his childhood. On the **Sabbath**, he went to the place of worship.
- **41:3** The day after Jesus was buried was a **Sabbath** day, and the Jews were not permitted to go to the tomb on that day.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H4868, H7676, H7677, G43150, G45210

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Referenced in: Exodus 16 Chapter Introduction; Exodus 31 General Notes

sin, sinful, sinner, sinning

Definition:

The term “sin” refers to actions, thoughts, and words that are against God’s will and laws. Sin can also refer to not doing something that God wants us to do.

- Sin includes anything we do that does not obey or please God, even things that other people don’t know about.
- Thoughts and actions that disobey God’s will are called “sinful.”
- Because Adam sinned, all human beings are born with a “sinful nature,” a nature that that controls them and causes them to sin.
- A “sinner” is someone who sins, so every human being is a sinner.
- Sometimes the word “sinners” was used by religious people like the Pharisees to refer to people who did not keep the law as well as the Pharisees thought they should.
- The term “sinner” was also used for people who were considered to be worse sinners than other people. For example, this label was given to tax collectors and prostitutes.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “sin” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “disobedience to God” or “going against God’s will” or “evil behavior and thoughts” or “wrongdoing.”
- To “sin” could also be translated as to “disobey God” or to “do wrong.”
- Depending on the context “sinful” could be translated as “full of wrongdoing” or “wicked” or “immoral” or “evil” or “rebelling against God.”
- Depending on the context the term “sinner” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “person who sins” or “person who does wrong things” or “person who disobeys God” or “person who disobeys the law.”
- The term “sinners” could be translated by a word or phrase that means “very sinful people” or “people considered to be very sinful” or “immoral people.”
- Ways to translate “tax collectors and sinners” could include “people who collect money for the government, and other very sinful people” or “very sinful people, including (even) tax collectors.”
- Make sure the translation of this term can include sinful behavior and thoughts, even those that other people don’t see or know about.
- The term “sin” should be general, and different from the terms for “wickedness” and “evil.”

(See also: disobey, evil, flesh, tax collector)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 9:1-3
- 1 John 1:10
- 1 John 2:2
- 2 Samuel 7:12-14
- Acts 3:19
- Daniel 9:24
- Genesis 4:7
- Hebrews 12:2
- Isaiah 53:11
- Jeremiah 18:23
- Leviticus 4:14
- Luke 15:18
- Matthew 12:31

- Romans 6:23
- Romans 8:4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **3:15** God said, “I promise I will never again curse the ground because of the evil things people do, or destroy the world by causing a flood, even though people are **sinful** from the time they are children.”
- **13:12** God was very angry with them because of their **sin** and planned to destroy them.
- **20:1** The kingdoms of Israel and Judah both **sinned** against God. They broke the covenant that God made with them at Sinai.
- **21:13** The prophets also said that the Messiah would be perfect, having no **sin**. He would die to receive the punishment for other people’s **sin**.
- **35:1** One day, Jesus was teaching many tax collectors and other **sinners** who had gathered to hear him.
- **38:5** Then Jesus took a cup and said, “Drink this. It is my blood of the New Covenant that is poured out for the forgiveness of **sins**.”
- **43:11** Peter answered them, “Every one of you should repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ so that God will forgive your **sins**.”
- **48:8** We all deserve to die for our **sins**!
- **49:17** Even though you are a Christian, you will still be tempted to **sin**. But God is faithful and says that if you confess your **sins**, he will forgive you. He will give you strength to fight against **sin**.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0817, H0819, H2398, H2399, H2400, H2401, H2402, H2403, H2408, H2409, H5771, H6588, H7683, H7686, G02640, G02650, G02660, G02680, G03610, G37810, G39000, G42580

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Referenced in: Exodus 16 Chapter Introduction; Exodus 34 General Notes

trust, trusted, trustworthy, trustworthiness

Definition:

To “trust” something or someone is to believe that the thing or person is true or dependable. That belief is also called “trust.” A “trustworthy” person is one you can trust to do and say what is right and true, and therefore one who has the quality of “trustworthiness.”

- Trust is closely related to faith. If we trust someone, we have faith in that person to do what they promised to do.
- Having trust in someone also means depending on that person.
- To “trust in” Jesus means to believe that he is God, to believe that he died on the cross to pay for our sins, and to rely on him to save us.
- A “trustworthy saying” refers to something that is said that can be counted on to be true.

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “trust” could include “believe” or “have faith” or “have confidence” or “depend on.”
- The phrase “put your trust in” is very similar in meaning to “trust in.”
- The term “trustworthy” could be translated as “dependable” or “reliable” or “can always be trusted.”

(See also: believe, confidence, faith, faithful, true)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 9:22-24
- 1 Timothy 4:9
- Hosea 10:12-13
- Isaiah 31:1-2
- Nehemiah 13:13
- Psalm 31:5
- Titus 3:8

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **12:12** When the Israelites saw that the Egyptians were dead, they **trusted** in God and believed that Moses was a prophet of God.
- **14:15** Joshua was a good leader because he **trusted** and obeyed God.
- **17:2** David was a humble and righteous man who **trusted** and obeyed God.
- **34:6** Then Jesus told a story about people who **trusted** in their own good deeds and despised other people.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0539, H0982, H1556, H2620, H2622, H3176, H4009, H4268, H7365, G16790, G38720, G39820, G40060, G41000, G42760

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Referenced in: Exodus 16 Chapter Introduction

unleavened bread

Definition:

The term “unleavened bread” refers to bread that is made without yeast or other leavening. This kind of bread is flat because it has no leaven to make it rise.

- When God freed the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, he told them to flee Egypt quickly without waiting for their bread to rise. So they ate unleavened bread with their meal. Since then unleavened bread is used in their yearly Passover celebrations to remind them of that time.
- Since leaven sometimes is used as a picture of sin, “unleavened bread” represents the removal of sin from a person’s life in order to live in a way that honors God.

Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways to translate this term could include “bread with no yeast” or “flat bread that did not rise.”
- Make sure the translation of this term is consistent with how you translate the term “yeast, leaven.”
- In some contexts, the term “unleavened bread” refers to the “Feast of Unleavened Bread” and can be translated that way.

(See also: bread, Egypt, feast, Passover, servant, sin, yeast)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 5:6-8
- 2 Chronicles 30:13-15
- Acts 12:3
- Exodus 23:14-15
- Ezra 6:21-22
- Genesis 19:1-3
- Judges 6:21
- Leviticus 8:1-3
- Luke 22:1

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H4682, G01060

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Referenced in: Exodus 12 Chapter Introduction

Yahweh

Facts:

The term “Yahweh” is God’s personal name in the Old Testament. The specific origin of this name is unknown, but it is probably derived from the Hebrew verb meaning, “to be.”

- Following tradition, many Bible versions use the term “LORD” or “the LORD” to represent “Yahweh.” This tradition resulted from the fact that historically, the Jewish people became afraid of mispronouncing Yahweh’s name and started saying “Lord” every time the term “Yahweh” appeared in the text. Modern Bibles write “LORD” with all capital letters to show respect for God’s personal name and to distinguish it from “Lord” which is a different Hebrew word.
- The ULT and UST texts always translate this term as, “Yahweh,” in agreement with the Hebrew text of the Old Testament.
- The term “Yahweh” never occurs in the original text of the New Testament; only the Greek term for “Lord” is used, even when quoting the Old Testament.
- In the Old Testament, when God spoke about himself, he would often use his name instead of a pronoun.
- “Yah” is a shortened form of the name Yahweh that occurs in poetry and praise (e.g. Hallelujah = "Praise Yah"), and in some Hebrew names (e.g. Zechariah = “Yah remembers”).

Translation Suggestions:

- “Yahweh” could be translated by a word or phrase that means “I am” or “existing one” or “the one who is” or “he who is present.”
- This term could also be written in a way that is similar to how “Yahweh” is spelled.
- Some church denominations prefer not to use the term “Yahweh” and instead use the traditional rendering, “LORD.” An important consideration is that this may be confusing when read aloud because it will sound the same as the title “Lord.” Some languages may have an affix or other grammatical marker that could be added to distinguish “LORD” as a name (Yahweh) from “Lord” as a title.
- It is best if possible to keep the name Yahweh where it literally occurs in the text, but some translations may decide to use only a pronoun in some places, to make the text more natural and clear.
- Introduce the quote with something like, “This is what Yahweh says.”

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: God, Lord)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 21:20
- 1 Samuel 16:7
- Daniel 9:3
- Ezekiel 17:24
- Genesis 2:4
- Genesis 4:3-5
- Genesis 28:13
- Hosea 11:12
- Isaiah 10:4
- Isaiah 38:8
- Job 12:10
- Joshua 1:9
- Lamentations 1:5
- Leviticus 25:35

- Malachi 3:4
- Micah 2:5
- Micah 6:5
- Numbers 8:11
- Psalm 124:3
- Ruth 1:21
- Zechariah 14:5

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **9:14** God said, “I AM WHO I AM. Tell them, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’ Also tell them, ‘I am **Yahweh**, the God of your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This is my name forever.’”
- **13:4** Then God gave them the covenant and said, “I am **Yahweh**, your God, who saved you from slavery in Egypt. Do not worship other gods.”
- **13:5** “Do not make idols or worship them, for I, **Yahweh**, am a jealous God.”
- **16:1** The Israelites began to worship the Canaanite gods instead of **Yahweh**, the true God.
- **19:10** Then Elijah prayed, “O **Yahweh**, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, show us today that you are the God of Israel and that I am your servant.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3050, H3068, H3069

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Referenced in: Exodus 3 Chapter Introduction

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