



How To Read the Book

How Hungry Are You?

Finding the meat in
God's Word will require
some work on *your* part.

Moving beyond the
baby food that comes
from casual reading will
require serious resolve.



Before You Start

Make the prayer of the Psalmist (119:18) your own before you start:

“Open my eyes [that is, my spiritual understanding] that I may see wonderful things in your law.”



Cut the Scripture Straight

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

• 2 Timothy 2:15 KJV



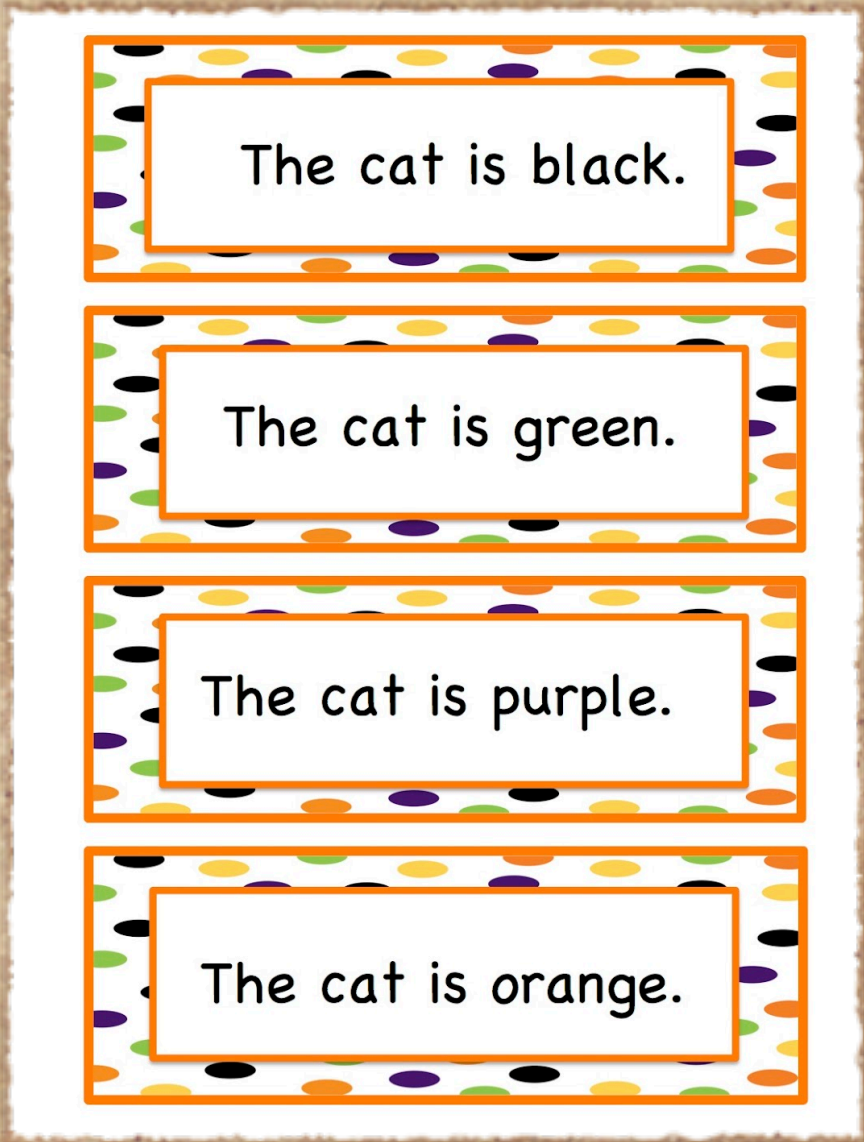
Cut the Scripture Straight

To “rightly divide” — an expression from Paul’s tent-making experience — means “to cut straight.” Tents were made of smaller skins sewn together. If not cut straight pieces wouldn’t fit together properly.



SENTENCES

There are 31,173 verses in the Bible made up of 773,746 words used in very short sentences like “Jesus wept” and very long sentences as in Paul’s letters.



The cat is black.

The cat is green.

The cat is purple.

The cat is orange.

See the Details

One of the most critical skills needed in reading the Bible is the ability to see the details.

Go over and over and over the text, looking for details and connections.



Observation

- Read seriously.



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- Note as many details as possible.



Observation

- Read seriously.
- Note as many details as possible.
- Refrain from interpreting or applying the text at this point.



Consider The Details

Repetition of words

Contrasts / Comparisons

Lists

Cause and Effects

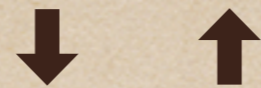
Figures of Speech

Conjunctions / Grammar



Context Matters

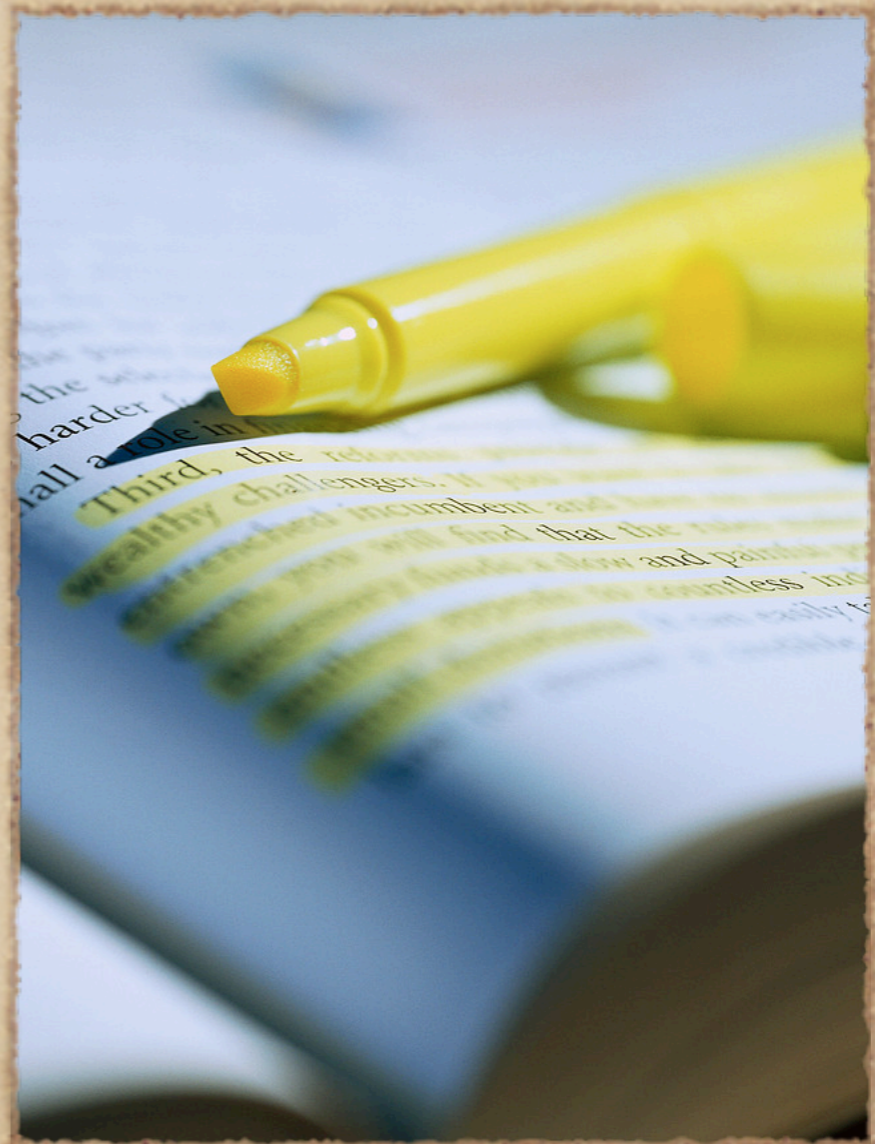
Analyze and understand small pieces of text.



Analyze and understand big pieces of text.

Repetition of Words

Look for words and phrases that repeat.



Repetition of Words

1 John 2

¹⁵ Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. ¹⁶ For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world.

¹⁷ The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.

Contrasts

Look for items, ideas, or individuals that are contrasted with each other. Remember that contrast focuses on differences.



Contrasts

The one who despises the word
will be in debt to it,

But the one who fears the commandment
will be rewarded.

• Proverbs 13:13

Comparisons

Look for items, ideas, or individuals that are compared with each other. Remember that comparison focuses on similarities.



Comparisons

The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field; and this is smaller than all other seeds; but when it is full grown, it is larger than the garden plants, and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.

- Matthew 13:31-32

Lists

Explore the significance of lists (more than two items) and consider...

- the order
- groupings

15 therefore calamity will come upon him suddenly;

^bin a moment he will be broken

^cbeyond healing.

16 There are ^dsix things that the LORD hates,

^dseven that are an abomination to him:

17 ^ehaughty eyes, ^fa lying tongue, and ^ghands that shed innocent blood,

18 ^ha heart that devises wicked plans, ⁱfeet that make haste to run to evil,

19 ^ja false witness who ^kbreathes out lies, and one who ^asows discord among brothers.

Cause and Effect

As you read look for a stated cause and then the effect of that cause.

Note that there may be more than one effect from a single cause mentioned in the text.



Cause and Effect

CAUSE

A gentle answer

but a harsh word



EFFECT

turns away wrath,

stirs up anger.

• Proverbs 15:1

Cause and Effect

CAUSE

For he who does wrong



EFFECT

will receive the consequences of the wrong
which he has done, and that without partiality.

• Colossians 3:25

Figures of Speech

Figures of speech are images in which words are used in a sense other than the normal, literal sense. They paint images to which we can relate.



Figures of Speech

Identify the figures of speech in Psalm 119:105

Thy word is a lamp to my feet,
And a light to my path.

Conjunctions

Conjunctions are like the couplings that hold train cars together. They connect things. Identify the function of the conjunction and determine what the conjunction connects.



Conjunctions

Examples of Conjunctions:

- And
- Therefore
- For
- Since
- But
- Because

FANBOYS = For / And / Not / But / Or / Yet / So

Conjunctions

But generally indicates a contrast.

Therefore or So usually presents some type of conclusion based on earlier arguments or reasons.
Where you see a “therefore” find out what it’s there for.

Conjunctions

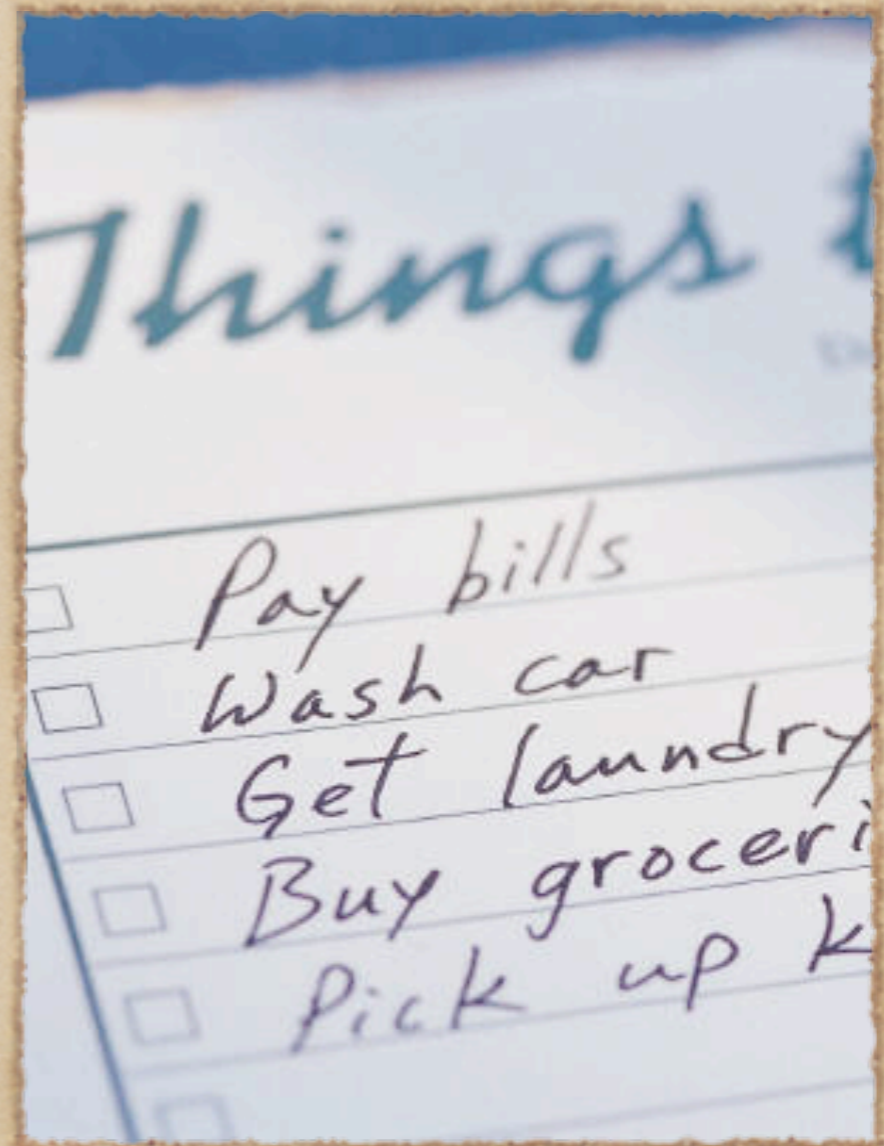
Now Naaman, captain of the army of the king of Aram, was a great man with his master, and highly respected, because by him the Lord had given great victory to Aram. The man was also a valiant warrior, **but** he was a leper.

• 2 Kings 5:1

Verbs

Verbs communicate the action of the sentence.

Note whether the verbal action in the text is past, present, future, active, passive, or imperative.



Note the Tense

Past Tense = I went

Present Tense = I go

Future Tense = I will go

Note especially imperative verbs like "Go" because these are often God's commands to us.

Note the Tense

Active Verbs = the subject is doing the action

Passive Verbs = the subject is acted upon

Note: In Paul's letters passive verbs often underscore what God has done for us and active verbs define what we do for God or what He commands us to do.

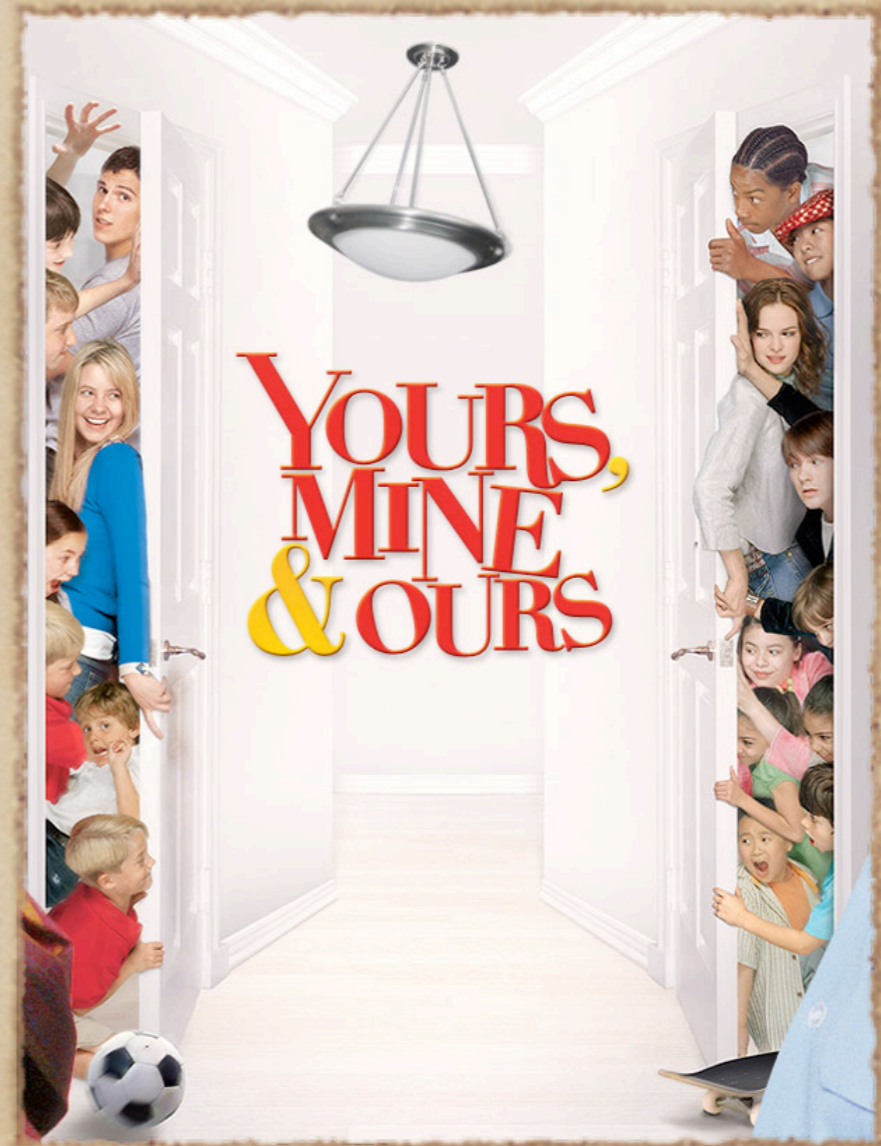
Note the Tense

Since then, you **have been raised** [passive] with Christ, **set** [active] your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

• Colossians 3:1

Pronouns

Pay attention to all pronouns and be sure to identify the antecedent (to whom or what the pronoun refers).



v. 7 ← CONJUNCTION
TIMING BUT YOU • WILL • RECEIVE POWER WHEN

DEFINITE ARTICLE THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES ON YOU; AND *

LIST YOU • WILL • BE MY WITNESSES IN JERUSALEM

Near
to
Fer

AND IN ALL JUDEA AND SAMARIA, AND TO THE *

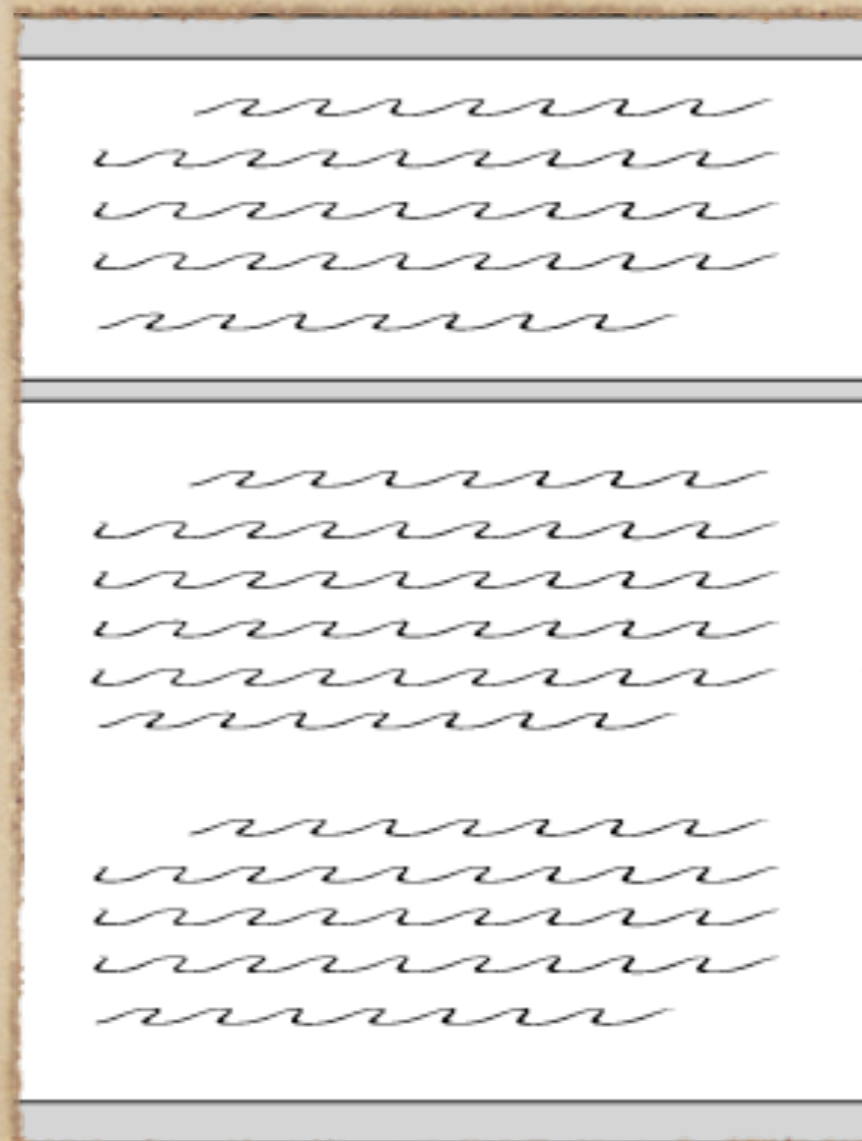
FIGURE OF SPEECH
ENDS OF THE EARTH.

Observations in Acts 1:8

But [conjunction] you [plural] will [future tense] receive [passive verb] power [see "Holy Spirit"] when [cause/effect; timing] the [definite article] Holy Spirit [the person of "power"] comes [passive] on you [plural]; and [conjunction] you [plural] will [future tense] be [active verb] my [antecedent in v. 7] witnesses [plural; purpose of "power"] in [note the following list from near to far and smaller to larger] Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to [note figure of speech] the ends of the earth.

PARAGRAPHS

Paragraphs are longer and more complex units of text. Apply the same methods of observation used at the sentence level plus some additional methods.



General and Specific

Observe how a paragraph begins. Consider if there is movement from a general statement to specifics of the idea or from specifics to a general statement.



General to Specific

And Asa did good and right
in the sight of the Lord his God.

2 Chronicles 14:2



Explanation of how Asa, king of
Judah, did good and right
in the sight of the Lord.

2 Chronicles 14:3-8

Specific to General

Specifics about the
nature of love.

1 Corinthians 13:1-8



General statement or
summary about the
nature of love.

1 Corinthians 13:13

Questions & Answers

Note if the text is built
on a question and
answer format.



Questions and Answers

Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord?
And who shall stand in his holy place?

Psalm 24:3



Answer follows in verse 4 (note the list)

He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
Who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood,
And has not sworn deceitfully.

Dialogue

If the text includes dialogue, note who is speaking and to whom.



Dialogue

- Who are the participants?
- Who is speaking to whom?
- What is the setting?
- Are other people around?
- Are they listening?
- Are they participating in the dialogue?
- Is the dialogue an argument, discussion, lecture, chat?
- What is the point of the dialogue?

Dialogue

Then the Lord sent
Nathan to David. And he
came to him and said...

2 Samuel 12:1-15



Purpose/Result Statements

Look for phrases or sentences that describe the reason, the result, or the consequence of some action.



Purpose/Result Statements

Purpose/Result statements are frequently introduced by result-oriented conjunctions such as “that,” “in order that,” and “so that.”

I have hidden your word
in my heart that I may not
sin against you.

• Psalm 119:11

Means

Note if a sentence indicates that something was done by means of someone or something (answers how). See if you can insert “by means of” into the sentence.



Means

How can a young man
keep his way pure?

By keeping it according
to Thy word.

• Psalm 119:9

Purpose or
action desired.

The means for
accomplishing
that action.

Conditional Clauses

Conditional clauses
present conditions
whereby some action,
consequence, reality, or
result will happen.

IF
THEN

Conditional Clauses

If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways

Conditional aspect introduced by the conditional conjunction "if."

then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

Resultant action sometimes (not always) introduced by "then."

• 2 Chronicles 7:14

Conditional Clauses

If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in darkness,

we lie and do not live out the truth.

• 1 John 1:6

Conditional aspect introduced by the conditional conjunction "if."

Resultant action has no specific introductory words.

Actions

Take note of the actions of people and those of God in the passage. Who does what? What is the connection between what God does and what people do? Is God described in relational terms like Father?



Actions

The Rich Man and Lazarus | Luke 16:19-31

There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores.

Emotional Terms

The Bible is a book about relationships, primarily relationships between God and people. Look for words that convey emotion.



Emotional Terms

And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and **felt compassion**, and **ran** and **embraced** him and **kissed** him.

• Luke 15:20



The Tone of the Passage

Note the overall tone of the passage. The tone will be closely related to the identification of emotional terms. Look for joy, anger, passion, disappointment, etc.



The Tone of the Passage

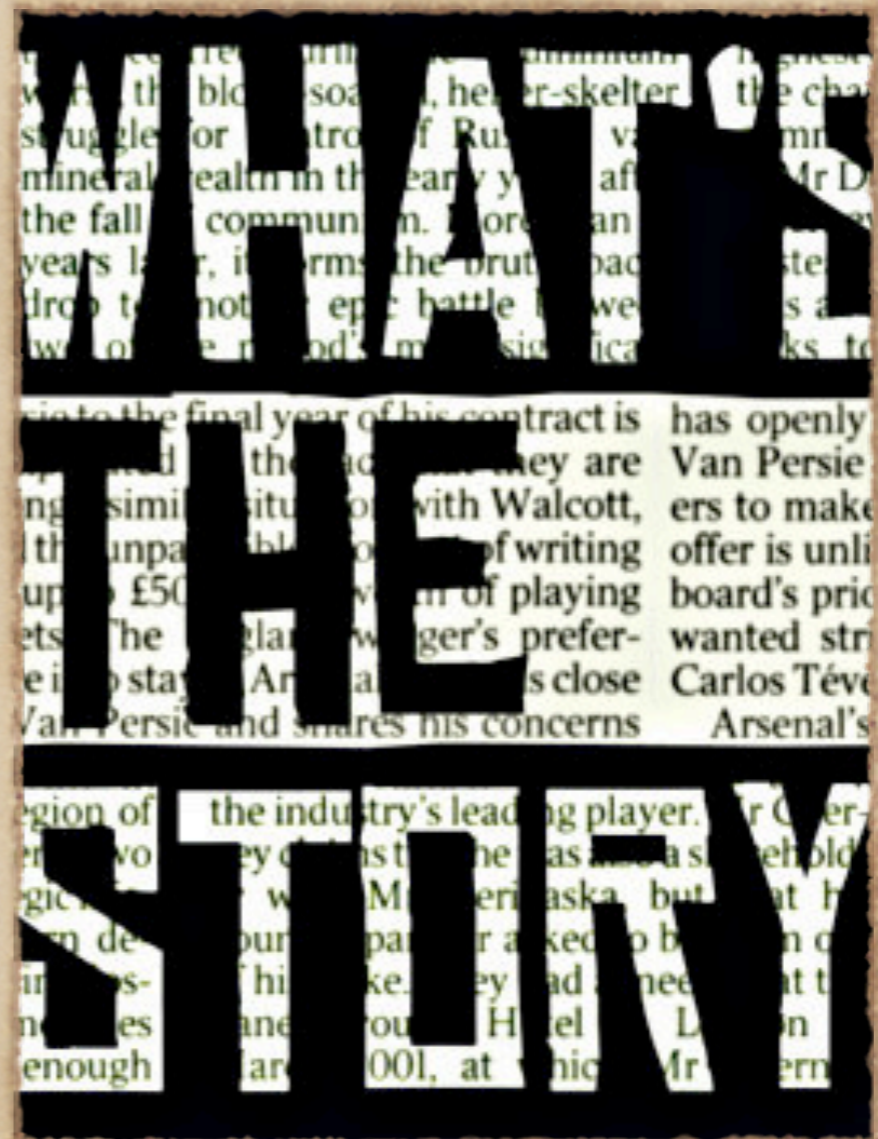
Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they servants of Abraham? So am I.

Are they servants of Christ? (I speak as if insane) I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death.

• 2 Corinthians 11:22-23

DISCOURSES

Units of text that are longer than paragraphs. When reading these longer units of biblical text, apply the lessons about observation that you use in reading sentences and paragraphs.



Read Carefully

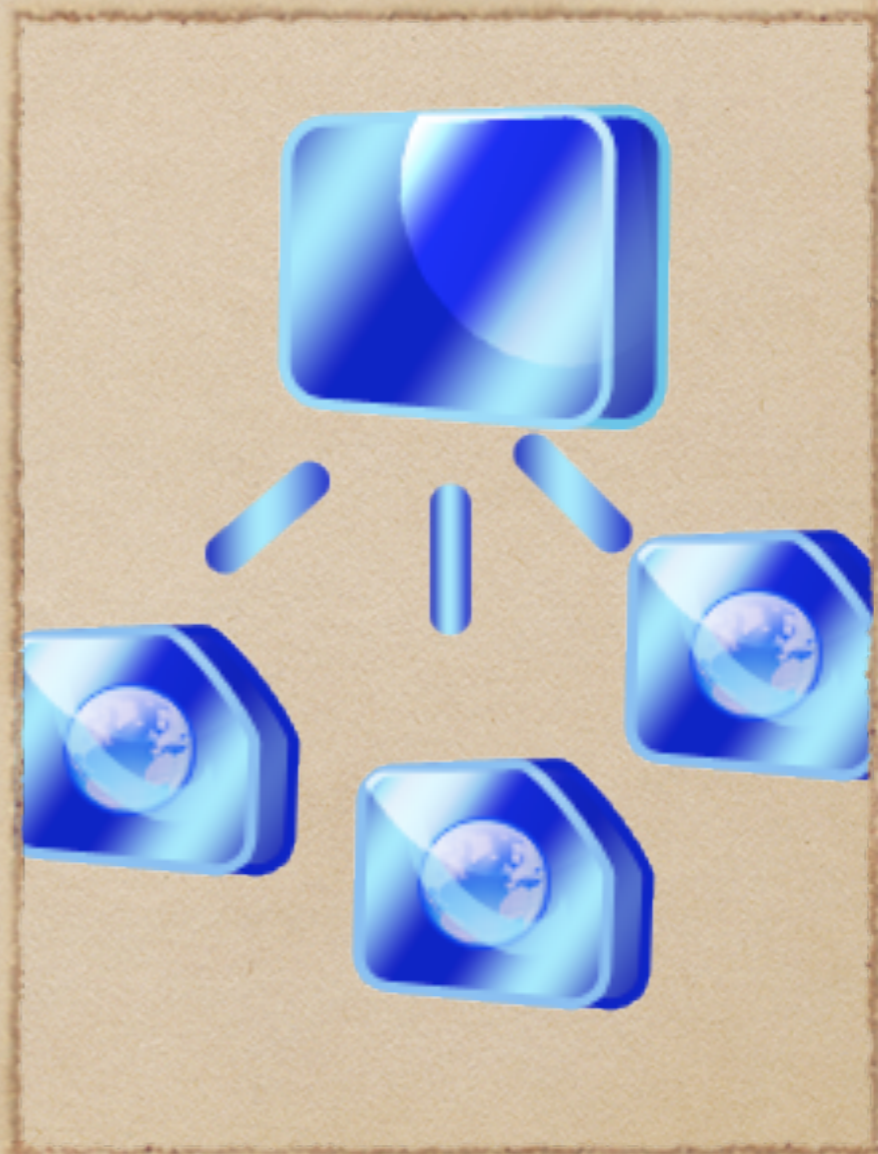
“It’s not what you look at
that matters, it’s what
you see.”

- Henry David Thoreau



Connections

Consider how the paragraphs and discourses *you* are reading relate to and connect with the paragraphs/episodes that come before and after the one *you* are studying.



Connections

Look for connections...

- repeated words
- repeated themes
- cause-and-effect
- conjunctions between paragraphs
- time sequence

Connections

Mark 8:14-21

Dialogue between Jesus and disciples. Note that they do not really understand who Jesus is.

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Dialogue between Jesus and a blind man. Illustrates that insight often comes slowly.

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Mark 8:14-21

Dialogue between Jesus and disciples. Note that they do not really understand who Jesus is.

Mark 8:22-26

Dialogue between Jesus and a blind man. Illustrates that insight often comes slowly.

Mark 8:27-30

Dialogue between Jesus and disciples. Peter acknowledges that he now sees Jesus clearly.

Story Shifts

Look for places where
the story seems to take
a new turn.



Story Shifts

Example:

In Paul's letters shifts take the form of a major break.

Ephesians in a nutshell:

Chapters 1-3
Doctrinal



Chapters 4-6
Practical Living

In Chapters 1-3 Paul used explanatory or descriptive types of verbs that describe what Christ has done for us.



In Chapters 4-6 Paul used imperative verbs that call us to live in a manner worthy of Christ and all He has done for us.

Story Shifts

In narrative passages shifts are usually signaled by episodes. These episodes function as pivots on which the story shifts or takes a new turn.



Story Shifts

2 Samuel 1-10

David is strong, victorious, and confident.

Story Shifts

2 Samuel 1-10

David is strong victorious and confident.

2 Samuel 13-24

David is insecure, weak, and indecisive.

Story Shifts

2 Samuel 1-10

David is strong victorious and confident.

2 Samuel 11-12

David sins by committing adultery with Bathsheba and having her husband killed.



Pivot
Event

2 Samuel 13-24

David is insecure, weak, and indecisive.

Interchange

A literary device, used primarily in narrative, that involves contrasting or comparing two stories at the same time as part of the story development.



Interchange

1 Samuel 1-3

Eli the priest



Hophni & Phinehas
Disobedient sons

Hannah, wife of Elkanah



Barren
Begged God for a Son
Mother of Samuel

Interchange

1:1-2:11 | Hannah and Samuel

2:12-17 | Hophní & Phínehas

2:18-21 | Samuel

2:22-25 | Hophní & Phínehas

2:26 | Samuel

2:27-36 | Hophní & Phínehas

3:1-9 | Samuel

3:10-21 | Both stories come together

Chiasm

A literary feature especially used in the Old Testament. In a chiasm a list of items, ideas, or events is structured in such a way that the first item parallels the last, the second item parallels the second to the last item, and so forth.



Chiasm

These verses are called 'chiasmic' because in making of the Greek letter X (chi), you draw lines from right to left and left to right.

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making of the Greek
letter X (chi), you
draw lines from right
to left and left to
right.

Genesis 9:6

- (1) Whoever sheds
- (2) the blood
- (3) of man,
- (3') by man
- (2') shall his blood
- (1') be shed

Inclusio

Closely related to chiasm, but not as complicated. A literary technique in which a passage (a story, poem, etc) has the same or similar world, statement, event, or theme at the beginning and the end.



Inclusio

O Lord, our Lord,
How majestic is Thy name
in all the earth. • Psalm 8:1

Verses 2–8

O Lord, our Lord,
How majestic is Thy name
in all the earth. • Psalm 8:9



Inclusio is also called
bracketing or framing.



Remember

You will not graduate
from Bible study until
you meet the Author
face to face.



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