



READING 6 Understand, make inferences, and draw conclusions about the varied structural patterns and features of literary nonfiction. Analyze the effect of contradiction. **RC-12(B)** Make complex inferences about text and use textual evidence to support understanding.

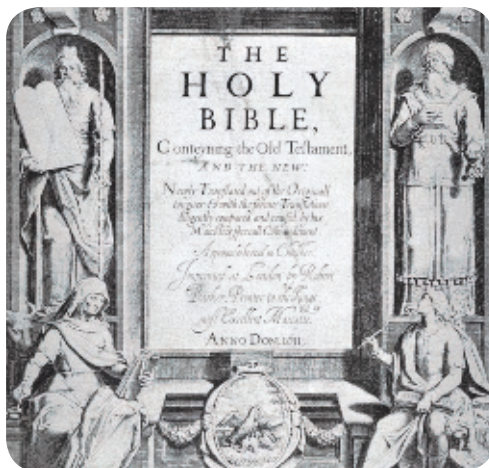
DID YOU KNOW?

The King James Bible ...

- contains more than 12,000 different English words.
- is the source of many common expressions, such as “the apple of his eye” and “at their wits’ end.”
- is one of the most published books in history, with more than one billion copies printed.

Meet the Author

The King James Bible



In 1603, when James I, the successor of Elizabeth I, became king of England, Puritan leaders petitioned him to support a new translation of the Bible. Although James bore no great love for the Puritans, he agreed that English worshipers needed a better translation of the Bible than the ones that were currently popular.

A Massive Undertaking In 1604, the king appointed 54 distinguished scholars and clergymen to create a new version. (In the end, not all of them actively participated in the translation.) Their goal was to create a Bible that would be more accurate than previous English versions and more beautiful in its use of the English language. The scholars split into groups and translated the Bible piecemeal. To ensure consistency and impartiality of the new translation, they all followed a strict set of rules.

To make their translation as accurate as possible, they worked from original Greek and Hebrew texts. They also consulted previous English translations. In the preface to the new translation, they praised earlier translations and noted their indebtedness to them: “We never thought, from the beginning that we should need to make a new translation, nor yet to make of a bad one a good one; . . . but to make a good one better, or out of many good ones, one principal good one.” The final result of their endeavors was the King James Bible, which was to remain the main English version of the Protestant Bible for some 300 years.

A Popular Classic Although the language of the King James Bible is elegant, it is also simple and straightforward. It was not intended solely for the educated elite. Clergymen throughout England read from it at services, making its message available to the most humble parishioners. The translation also had a tremendous impact on the authors of the time, including John Milton and John Bunyan, whom the 19th-century clergyman C. H. Spurgeon claimed was so “saturated with scripture” that he was “a living Bible.” Centuries later, authors such as William Wordsworth, Herman Melville, Walt Whitman, and T. S. Eliot continued to find inspiration in the themes, imagery, and language of the King James Bible. Even today, although many other translations are available, it remains the most influential of all versions.

Author Online



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LITERARY ANALYSIS: SCRIPTURAL WRITING

Scriptural writing, or sacred literature, conveys the traditions and beliefs of particular religions. Such texts are often used in rituals of worship and may be considered divinely inspired. The King James Bible is an example of Christian scripture, notable for its lyrical language. It contains the following literary forms.

A **maxim** is a brief and memorable statement of general truth, one that often imparts guidance or advice. Such writing is common in the Book of Ecclesiastes, a work that stems from the wisdom movement of the early Hebrews.

A **psalm** is a sacred song or lyric poem. Most psalms were originally set to music and performed during worship services in the temples of ancient Israel. The Book of Psalms preserves 150 hymns.

A **parable** is a short story that is meant to teach a lesson or illustrate a moral truth. The characters and events of a parable are usually **allegorical**—that is, they stand for abstract ideas and principles, such as love and forgiveness. Among the best-known parables are those attributed to Jesus and presented in the Gospels of the New Testament.

As you read the selections, look for details that are characteristic of each literary form.

READING SKILL: MAKE INFERENCES

Many passages in the King James Bible are explicit and easy to grasp. However, certain parts—such as maxims, psalms, and parables—often require readers to **make inferences**, or logical guesses, about the wisdom they convey. Sometimes called “reading between the lines,” making inferences involves using your own knowledge and details from a text to figure out information not directly stated. As you read each selection, make inferences about the spiritual advice or lesson communicated. Record your inferences using a chart like the one shown.

<i>Selection</i>	<i>Details from the Text</i>	<i>Inferences About Spiritual Advice or Lesson</i>
<i>Ecclesiastes, Chapter 3</i>		
<i>Psalms 23</i>		
<i>Parable of the Prodigal Son</i>		

Where do we find WISDOM?

If you have ever “burned the midnight oil” to finish a paper or “stuck your neck out” for a friend, you were using expressions derived from the King James Bible. The Bible is one of the world’s most important works of literature and, for many people, a source of great wisdom. For example, Ecclesiastes is intended to help people find meaning in life. Psalm 23 offers spiritual guidance, and the Parable of the Prodigal Son imparts a moral lesson.

DISCUSS Working with two or three classmates, create a list of the people, books, and other resources you regularly turn to when you seek advice about life’s problems—great and small. Discuss each response. Then circle the example of the resource that has been the most reliable and helpful. Compare the results of your discussion with those of other groups.

Where We Find Wisdom

1. Grandparents
2. Advice columns
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.



Complete the activities in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

from the King James Bible

Ecclesiastes,

CHAPTER 3

- 1 To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:
- 2 A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;
- 3 A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;
- 4 A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
- 5 A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
- 6 A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;
- 7 A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
- 8 A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace. **A**

Analyze Visuals ►

This image is from a 16th-century Christian prayer book. In what ways does the scene relate to events described in Ecclesiastes, Chapter 3?



TEKS 6

A CONTRADICTION

Opposites, such as the verbs “to weep” and “to laugh” or “to love” and “to hate,” **contradict**, or oppose, each other. The contradictory pairs in this selection are like the opposite sides of a scale, with one extreme balancing the other. Pairing contradictory elements in this way demonstrates the full spectrum, or range, of an idea, emotion, or situation, such as “a time to be born and a time to die” in verse 2. This selection includes contradictory pairs of verbs in almost every line. What message do they help convey?

Literary Analysis

1. **Analyze Repetition** In literature, repetition is a technique in which a word or group of words is repeated throughout a selection. What effect does the extensive repetition in this selection help create?
2. **Make Judgments** Which lines do you think have special relevance to contemporary life?

The Month of October: Ploughing and Sowing,
Simon Bening. Miniature from *The Book of Hours*.
Bodycolor on vellum, 14 cm × 9.5 cm. © Victoria &
Albert Museum, London/Art Resource, New York.



Psalm 23

- 1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
- 2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.
- 3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
- 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
- 5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
- 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. **B**

B SCRIPTURAL WRITING

Psalm 23 is part of a collection of psalms often called “songs of trust.” Why might it be included in this group?

Literary Analysis

1. **Identify Metaphor** A metaphor is a figure of speech that compares two things that are basically unlike but have something in common. What metaphor does the speaker use in verses 1–4 to describe his relationship with the Lord?
2. **Analyze Word Choice** In verses 1–3, the speaker refers to the Lord using the pronouns *he* and *his*. However, beginning in verse 4, the speaker switches to *thou* and *thy*. What does this shift seem to suggest about the relationship between the speaker and the Lord?
3. **Make Inferences** Why does the speaker expect goodness and mercy to follow him all the days of his life? Give details to support your response.

The Parable of the Prodigal Son

from **LUKE, CHAPTER 15**



The Parable of the Prodigal Son, section from the Mompelgarter Altarpiece, Matthias Gerung. Oil on panel, 41 cm × 28 cm. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. © Bridgeman Art Library.

- 11 And he said, A certain man had two sons:
12 And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.
13 And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.
14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

12 And he divided unto them his living: And the father divided his livelihood, or wealth, between the two sons.

13 substance: material possessions.

- 15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.
- 16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.
- 17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!
- 18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,
- 19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. **C**
- 20 And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.
- 21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.
- 22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:
- 23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:
- 24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.
- 25 Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing.
- 26 And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.
- 27 And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.
- 28 And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him.
- 29 And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:
- 30 But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.
- 31 And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.
- 32 It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

15 **he sent:** the citizen sent.

16 **fain:** gladly.

C MAKE INFERENCES

Judging from the younger son's realization in verses 17–19, what values does the parable suggest are important?

Language Coach

Oral Fluency The word *nigh* (verse 25), meaning “near,” is rarely used today, but it contains a spelling pattern and pronunciation found in many English words. Pronounce *nigh* and then think of two other words with the same pattern.

28 **intreated:** entreated; urged.

29 **transgressed:** violated; broke; **kid:** young goat.

30 **which hath . . . harlots:** who has wasted your wealth on prostitutes.

32 **meet:** fitting; proper.

Comprehension

1. **Clarify** Ecclesiastes, Chapter 3, begins: “To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.” What is meant by this statement?
2. **Clarify** In Psalm 23, what kind of relationship does the speaker have with the Lord?
3. **Summarize** Review the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Describe the responses of the father and the elder son to the return of the Prodigal Son.



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Literary Analysis

4. **Interpret Imagery** The King James Bible is widely admired for the beauty of its imagery—words and phrases that create vivid sensory experiences. Explain how each of the following images from Psalm 23 appeals to your senses. Which example creates the most memorable mental picture?
 - “leadeth me beside the still waters” (verse 2)
 - “walk through the valley of the shadow of death” (verse 4)
 - “anointest my head with oil” (verse 5)
5. **Analyze Parable** Many characters in parables are **allegorical**—that is, they stand for abstract ideas and principles. Describe the main characters from the Parable of the Prodigal Son. What might each character symbolize?
6. **Make Inferences** Review the chart you made as you read. What **wisdom** or spiritual advice does each selection convey? Cite evidence in your answer.
7. **Synthesize Information** Each biblical selection dates back thousands of years and derives from the traditions of the ancient Hebrews. Using evidence from all three texts, what general statements can you make about the values and way of life of these people?
8. **Evaluate Scriptural Writing** The three selections in the lesson are among the Bible’s most famous passages. Review the forms of scriptural writing on page 481. In what ways does each selection fit the pattern of its literary form? Cite specific evidence to support your answer.

Literary Criticism

9. **Different Perspectives** How might readers of varying ages—for example, a young adult and an elderly person—differ in their reactions to the passage from Ecclesiastes, the psalm, or the parable? Use details from the text and your own knowledge to support your ideas.

Where do we find **WISDOM?**

What are some contemporary examples of parables in print or other media, such as movies and television? What moral lessons do they convey?