

6 W's

Who?

Who are the people in the text?

Make a note about anything that is said about the people in the text and outside of the text.

What do the people say?

What?

What is happening in the text?

What are the events? In what order?

What happens to the characters?

What is described as being *wrong*?

What is the point of the text?

What is the author intending to communicate?

Where?

Where is the narrative taking place?

Where are the people in the story?

Where are they coming from?

Where are they going to?

Where is the writer?

Where are the original readers of the text?

Refer to a biblical atlas to locate places.

When?

When was the text written?

When did or will the events take place?

When did or will they occur in relation to other events in Scripture?

Why?

Why is this included? Or why is something excluded?

Why is it placed here?

Why does it follow or precede something else?

Why does a character say something? Or say nothing?

The "why" question is powerful - use it often.

Wherefore? (So what?)

What difference would it make if I applied this truth to my life?

Use the 9 application questions as shown on front...

BIBLE STUDY HELP GUIDE

Adapted from *Living by the Book* by Howard H. Hendricks

OBSERVE...

What do I see?

...and EXPLORE

What *could* it mean?

Ask questions / conduct word studies

INTERPRET

What *does* it mean?

Consult commentaries last for confirmation/clarification

5 KEYS TO INTERPRETATION

Content

Context

Comparison

Culture

Consultation

APPLY

How does it work?

9 APPLICATION ?'s

1. Is there an example for me to follow?
2. Is there a sin to avoid?
3. Is there a promise to take hold of?
4. Is there a prayer to repeat?
5. Is there a command to obey?
6. Is there a condition to meet?
7. Is there a verse to memorize?
8. Is there an error to mark?
9. Is there a challenge to face?

Things to Observe

1. **Repetition** – Look for terms, phrases, characters, and incidents that repeat.
2. **Locate key terms** – These are important words in the text. They would include repeated words and characters, as well as **action words** (verbs) and other words that you determine are important for understanding or need more information.
 - a. Mark up (by circling, highlighting, etc.) additional terms.
 - b. Write down the terms.
3. **Tone of the passage** – Pay attention to the overall tone of the passage: happy, sad, encouraging, rebuking.
4. **Similarities / Contrasts** – Look for ideas, individuals, and/or items that are compared with each other.
5. **Lists** – When the text mentions more than two items, identify them as a list.
6. **Connecting words** – Notice terms that join thoughts – words like *and*, *or*, *but*, *therefore*, *for*. Note what is being connected.
 - a. *Buts* are important because they designate a shift.
 - b. When you see *therefore* ask, “What is it *there for*?”
7. **If...then statements** – These statements identify conditional relationships like cause-and-effect.
8. **Figures of speech** – Identify expressions that convey an image or thought using word pictures, simile, metaphor, etc. (Rom. 12:1 - living sacrifice).
9. **Grammatical structure** – If you’re good with grammar, use it. Observe subjects, verbs (type), object, and so on. If you’re not good with grammar, don’t worry about it or decide to brush up or develop those skills.
10. **Actions/roles of God** – Identify actions or roles that the text ascribes to God.
 - a. What did the Father do?
 - b. Jesus?
 - c. Holy Spirit?
11. **Actions/roles of people** – Identify actions or roles that the text ascribes to people or encourages people to do or be.
 - a. What did Paul do? What was his role?
 - b. Readers’ actions and/or roles?
 - c. What does the author encourage his readers to do or be?
12. **Pronouns** – What is a pronoun referring back to? (Examples: I, me, you, he, she, him, her, we, us, they, them, it).
 - a. Above the pronoun, write down what the pronoun refers to, if you know it.
 - b. If you don’t know it, ask the question in your margin.
13. **True to life** – Notice things that show authenticity. Try to put yourself in the author’s shoes.
 - a. Does the author communicate authenticity?
 - b. How, where? Make a note of it.
14. **How? statements** – Note if a sentence indicates that something was done by means of someone/something (answers “how?”). You can insert the phrase “by means of” into the sentence.
 - a. How are we to be transformed?
15. **Why? or purpose statements** – Look for assumed or stated statements that answer the question “why?” You usually can insert the phrase “in order that” or “so that.”
16. **Emotional terms** – Does the passage use terms that are emotionally charged? (Examples: kinship words (father, son) or words like “urge”).