Bible Translations Guide

Version	Reading Level	Publisher/ Organization	Dates	WFW/TFT* Paraphrase	Strengths	Weaknesses
Amplified Bible	11th grade	Zondervan	1965 (NT), 2015	WFW w/ amp.	Provides multiple shades of meaning for words, enhancing understanding.	Can be cumbersome to read due to extensive bracketed clarifications; may lead to interpretative bias.
American Standard Version (ASV)	12th grade	Thomas Nelson & Sons	1901	WFW	Highly literal translation, useful for in-depth study.	Archaic language; does not incorporate recent manuscript discoveries.
New American Standard Bible (NASB)	11th grade	The Lockman Foundation	1971, 1995, 2020	WFW	Highly literal, suitable for detailed study; updated language.	Can be rigid and less readable; less suitable for public reading.
Common English Bible (CEB)	7th grade	Christian Resources Development Corporation	2011	TFT	Accessible language; gender-inclusive; suitable for a wide audience.	Some traditional terms are replaced, which may be unfamiliar to some readers.

English Standard Version (ESV)	10th grade	Crossway	2001, 2016	WFW	Balances readability with literalness; retains literary qualities of the KJV.	Criticized for its handling of gender-related passages.
First Nations Version (NT)	8th grade	InterVarsity Press	2021	Paraphrase	Reflects Indigenous cultural perspectives; offers fresh insights.	Limited to the New Testament; may be less familiar to those outside Indigenous cultures.
Jerusalem Bible (JB)	10th grade	Darton, Longman & Todd	1966	TFT	Literary elegance; suitable for public reading; incorporates modern biblical research.	Relies partly on the Latin Vulgate and Septuagint; some interpretative choices may be debated.
Revised New Jerusalem Bible (RNJB)	10th grade	Darton, Longman & Todd	2019	TFT	Balances literary style with more literal translation; suitable for reading aloud.	Some may prefer more traditional renderings of certain passages.
King James Version (KJV)	12th grade	Robert Barker	1611	WFW	Majestic literary style; historically influential.	Based on an inferior manuscript tradition; archaic language can be challenging.

New King James Version (NKJV)	9th grade	Thomas Nelson	1982	WFW	Updates archaic language of KJV; retains traditional phrasing.	Continues reliance on Textus Receptus for NT; some textual choices debated.
The Message	6th grade	NavPress	2002	Paraphrase	Contemporary, relatable language; makes Scripture accessible.	Highly interpretative; may stray from original meanings; can feel dated.
New International Version (NIV)	7th-8th grade	Biblica	1978, 1984, 2011	TFT	Balances readability with accuracy; widely accepted across denominations.	Some gender-related translation choices have been controversial.
New International Reader's Version (NIrV)	3rd grade	Biblica	1996, 1998, 2014	TFT	Simplified language; ideal for children and ESL readers.	Simplification may lead to loss of nuanced meanings.
New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)/ (NRSVue)	10th grade	National Council of Churches	1989, 2021	WFW	Accurate; inclusive language; widely used in academic settings.	Some traditionalists may find inclusive language choices contentious.

Reina-Valera 1960			Most recent edition 2015			
Nueva Version International (NVI)			First Published 1999		Gender inclusive language	

*Word for Word (Literal): Often the closest English form of Hebrew or Greek word; really good for academic study and works well with interlinear Bibles.

Drawback: readers may misunderstand figures of speech, literary devices, and cultural references

*Thought for Thought (Dynamic): Places a higher emphasis on summing up the biblical author's thoughts while still respecting the text. Perhaps might be more approachable, perfect for light reading or a devotion.

Drawback: every tweak in the name of understanding is a step toward the translator's interpretation

Paraphrase: focus on getting the general idea across with clear language; useful for those new to reading or new to their faith journey. May offer a fresh perspective.

Drawback: not meant to stand alone

Additional Resources:

https://www.bibles.net/topic/bible-translation-comparison/

Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes: Removing Cultural Blinders to Better Understand the Bible by E. Randolph Richards and Brandon J. O'Brien

A Handbook to Old Testament Exegesis by William P. Brown

Additional thoughts from the General Synod Council staff's Revelation 7:9 team on hospitality and Bible translation: https://www.faithward.org/bible-translation-recommendations-and-resources-for-engaging-scripture-with-hospitality-for-gods-diverse-family/