

How to Choose the Right Bible For You

This chart is not a complete compilation of all the Bibles available to you, nor does it tell you if these versions are available in other languages. I have tried to present the most popular Bibles for your comparison.

Translation	Reading Level	Translation Type	Study Bible	Reference Bible	Journaling Bible	Specialty Bible	Notes
Amplified Bible		Verbal equivalence; amplification of word meanings	√			√	Great if you enjoy word studies, because it amplifies the words so that you get the greatest meaning from them.
Common English Bible (CEB)	7	Hybrid: Verbal equivalence with dynamic balance and common language	√	√	√	√	A key goal of the translation team is to make the Bible accessible to a broad range of people; it's written at a comfortable level for over half of all English readers.
The Contemporary English Version (CEV)	5	Dynamic equivalence	√	√	√	√	The translators of the CEV followed three principles; that the CEV must be understood by: people without stumbling in speech; those with little or no comprehension of "Bible" language; all.
English Standard Version (ESV)	11	Verbal equivalence	√	√	√		Word-For-Word precision and accuracy
Good News Bible; The Bible in Today's English Version (TEV)	6	Dynamic equivalence	√	√	√		The <i>Good News Bible</i> was conceived because of a need in Africa and the Far East for a version of the Bible that was friendly to non-native English speakers.
Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB)	8	Hybrid: Verbal equivalence with dynamic balance	√	√	√	√	The Goals of the Holman Christian Standard Bible were to: equip serious Bible students with an accurate translation for study, devotion, and memorization; inspire English-speaking people across the world with a trustworthy, readable Bible; and affirm Scripture as the inerrant Word of God and to champion its authority over cultural influences that may compromise its truth

King James Version (KJV)	12	Verbal equivalence	√	√	√	√	In 1603, King James saw a need for a translation that would unify the Church of England, and justify its ecclesiology. The translation work was to be done by university scholars, reviewed by bishops, and ratified by the king himself.
The Living Bible (LB)	8	Paraphrase		√			Very easy reading that is much like reading a story. Useful for getting the general gist of the story.
The Message	6	Paraphrase		√			The Message Bible was born out of Eugene Peterson's desire to engage his congregation in the Word of God—in a way that would make its relevancy obvious in their lives.
The New American Bible (NAB)	7	Dynamic equivalence, 1970; verbal equivalence, 1986		√			Especially useful for Catholics.
New American Standard Bible (NASB)	11	Verbal equivalence	√	√	√	√	It no longer uses "Thee" and "Thou" in reference to Deity; phrases have been smoothed out; words that have changed meaning have been updated; verbs that have a wide range of meaning have been updated to better account for their use in the context; punctuation and paragraphing have been formatted to fit today's standards; notes about the ancient manuscripts have been revised to include more new and interesting facts
New Century Version (NCV)	6	Dynamic equivalence	√	√			This translation of God's Word was made from the original Hebrew and Greek languages. The translators attempted to use the Living Word Vocabulary.
New International Version (NIV)	8	Hybrid: Verbal equivalence with dynamic balance	√	√	√	√	The translators insisted that it be an Accurate, Beautiful, Clear, and Dignified translation suitable for public and private reading, teaching, preaching, memorizing, and liturgical use.

New International Reader's Version (NIRV)	3	Verbal equivalence, with dynamic balance and some simplification				√	The NIRV strives for a balance between a word-for-word and thought-for-thought translation, with an emphasis on meaning for simplification.
New Jerusalem Bible	8	Verbal equivalence, with dynamic tendencies		√			Has been compared more closely to the original Greek and Hebrew, and at the same time strives to be faithful to modern expressions of English. It has many helps in the back but is not a study bible.
New King James Version 1982 (NKJV)	11	Verbal equivalence	√	√	√	√	Beautifully worded and trustworthy, ideal for study, teaching, personal reading, and congregational use.
New Living Translation (NLT)	6	Dynamic equivalence	√	√	√	√	The challenge for the translators was to create a text that would make the same impact in the life of modern readers that the original text had for the original readers. In the New Living Translation, this is accomplished by translating entire thoughts (rather than just words) into natural, everyday English.
New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)	11	Verbal equivalence	√	√	√	√	One of the main purposes of the revision was the modernization of English. Direct speech was placed in quotation marks, and the printing of poetical parts of the Bible as poetry was carried further than had been done previously. The resulting version is scholarly, contemporary, and dignified, with simplified language and concern for inclusive rendering of pronouns for human beings. Includes a Catholic version with the Apocrypha
The Voice	8	Paraphrase		√			The Voice is a faithful dynamic equivalent translation that reads like a story with all the truth and wisdom of God's Word.