

English Bible Translations

(rated on a scale of 1 to 10 as to literalness)

Literal

- 1 **#The New Greek-English Interlinear** (1993) edited by Douglas; English interlinear by Brown and Comfort; best Greek text (UBS4); NRSV in margin, best interlinear
Marshall-Nestle interlinear – good Greek text (Nestle-Aland [NA23]), good interlinear, KJV, RSV, or NIV in margin, good interlinear
Berry interlinear – Textus Receptus [TR] Greek text, basically like Englishman's, KJV in margin, lexicon in back
Englishman's interlinear – TR, KJV in margin
Green interlinear – Englishman's with KJ2 in margin
The Interlinear Hebrew-Greek-English Bible* (1980) TR in NT, literal translation by Jay Green in margin; best OT interlinear (word meanings from BDB)
The NIV Interlinear Hebrew English Old Testament (1985) by John Kohlenberger; Hebrew from Biblia Hebraica Stuttgart (BHS); English word meanings from NIV; NIV in margin
Kingdom Interlinear – Westcott-Hort [WH] Greek text, New World Translation in margin, published by Jehovah's Witnesses
Diaglott – Griesbach Greek text, Wilson's New Emphatic Version in margin, published by Jehovah's Witnesses
- 2 **Young's Literal Translation*** (1862, 1887, 1898) very literal; Elizabethan English; based on TR
American Standard Version* (ASV–1901) also known as **American Revised Version** (ARV); best for literal study; based on good Greek text similar to WH; Elizabethan English; revision of KJV; American edition of ERV below:
English Revised Version* (ERV–1881, 1885) or **Revised Version** (RV), a revision of KJV; slightly less literal than ASV; British Elizabethan English; more textual variants in OT than ASV
New World Translation* (NWT–1961) Jehovah's Witnesses version; modern English; mistranslates passages relating to diety of Jesus in order to agree with JW doctrine
- 2 **King James II Version*** (KJ2–1971) KJV rewritten in modern English by Jay Green; more ½ literal; based on TR; weakness in scholarship
#New American Standard Version* (NASV, NASB–1963, 1971, rev. 1977, updated ed. 1995) revision of ASV; more modern English but not as literal, esp. updated ed.; uses Thou/Thy/Thee for God and Jesus; updated ed. uses You/Your; translated by unnamed evangelicals with Lockman Foundation; OT based on Biblia Hebraica (KBH); NT based on NA23; one of the two best for study
New Emphatic Version by B. Wilson in Diaglott; emphasis in Greek text indicated by use of typographical signs [YOU=pl]
King James Version* (KJV–1611) or Authorized Version (AV); Elizabethan English; based on Greek text similar to TR; revision of Bishop's Bible (1568) and 85% the same as Tyndale's

translation (1526–first English translation from Greek); most widely owned English version; leans slightly toward Calvinism and episcopalianism; poor use of synonyms for study purposes (translates one word by many synonyms)

New King James Version* (NKJV–1979, 1980, 1982) revision of KJV in modern English; based on Biblia Hebraica Stuttgart (BHS) in OT; based on TR in NT with notes from Hodges/Farstad Majority Greek Text and the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (UBS)

Douay Version* (1582, 1610) or Douay-Rheims Version; old Catholic version translated from Latin Vulgate; many "churchy" words; revised by Challoner (1750)

The Better Version (TBV–1973) by Chester Estes; modern English; based on Griesbach's Greek text

Living Oracles (1826) edited by A. Campbell; 19th century English; translated by G. Campbell, J. MacKnight, and P. Doddridge; important in the American Restoration Movement

Lamsa's Holy Bible from Ancient Eastern Manuscripts* (1933, 1939, 1940, 1957) translation of Syriac Peshitta

Amplified Version* (AB–1958, 1965, 1987) much helpful explanatory material and synonyms in text, but based on older scholarship; not for public reading; produced by Lockman Foundation

Idiomatic

3 **#Revised Standard Version*** (RSV–1946, 1952, 2nd ed. 1971) revision of ASV; modern formal English; uses Thou/Thy/Thee for God and Jesus; studiable; good balance between readability and literalness; 2nd edition better than 1st; Catholic edition (1965) based on best text; one of the two best for study

New Revised Standard Version* (NRSV–1989) revision of RSV; uses You for God; politically correct agenda to remove masculine emphasis from Bible; "brothers" translated many different ways; OT based on BHS; NT based on UBS3

Confraternity Version* (1941, 1952, 1955, 1961, 1969) Catholic translation; NT based on Latin compared with Greek; OT based on Hebrew

McCord's New Testament Translation of the Everlasting Gospel (1989) uses immerse for *baptizo*

The Christian Counselor's New Testament (1977) by Jay E. Adams; modern English; uses You for God; good

4 **New Berkley Version*** (NBV–1969) or Modern Language Bible; helpful footnotes; readable; revision of Berkley Version* (1945)

Translator's Translation (TT–1973) published by British and Foreign Bible Society; source text for native translators

4 **#New International Version*** (NIV–1973, 1978, rev. 1984) readable; good; translated by ½ evangelicals; published by International Bible Society (originally New York Bible Society); uses You for God; mixture of idiomatic and dynamic equivalence; less formal English than RSV and NRSV; eclectic Greek text (varies from UBS in about 300 places)

New American Bible* (NAB–1970, rev. 1986) Catholic; good; OT same as Confraternity

Dynamic

- 5 **American Translation*** (1923, 1927, 1948) by Smith and Goodspeed; NT by Edgar J. Goodspeed; OT by J.M.P. Smith, A.R. Gordon, T.J. Meek, and L. Waterman; uses "maiden" in Matt. 1:23
Moffat's A New Translation* (1926) based on von Soden's Greek text in NT
#**Jerusalem Bible*** (JB–1966) very good British English; primarily a Catholic translation; good footnotes (originally in French)
New Jerusalem Bible* (NJB–1985) revision of JB; questionable if an improvement; also Catholic
New English Bible* (NEB–1961, 1970) good scholarship; interpretive in places; loose handling of order of OT text
Revised English Bible* (REB–1989) revision of NEB
Weymouth (?)
Beck's The Bible in the Language of Today: An American Translation* (1963, 1976)
William's A Translation in the Language of the People (1937, 1966)
- 6 **Today's English Version*** (TEV–1966, 1970, 1971, 1976) or Good News Bible (GNB—also called Good News for Modern Man); easy to read; lack of consistency; 3rd edition is the best; published by American Bible Society
#**New Century Version*** (NCV–1986) revision of English Version for the Deaf for greater population; 4th grade English; good simple English translation; excellent for speakers of ESL
International Children's Version* (ICV–1983, 1986) children's edition of NCV above; 3rd grade English
English Version for the Deaf (EVD–1978) or **Easy-to-Read Version** (EtRV or ERV—not to be confused with English Revised Version) by the World Bible Translation Center
God's Word* (1995) dynamic-equivalent modern English translation without theological terms; some gender-neutral usage; OT based mainly on BHS, NT mainly on NA27; produced by God's Word to the Nations Bible Society
New Living Translation* (NLT--1996) revision of Living Bible below by ninety evangelical scholars; vast improvement in reliability; easy to read; OT based mainly on BHS, NT mainly on NA27

Paraphrase

- 7 **Contemporary English Version*** (CEV–1995) in simple English; numerous mistranslated passages; published by American Bible Society; OT based on BHS; NT based on UBS3
#**The Letters of Paul: An Expanded Paraphrase** (1965) by F.F. Bruce; good paraphrase; interleaved with English Revised Version; just contains Paul's letters
Barclay's A New Translation (WnB–1968, 1969) insightful
- 8 #**Phillips' The New Testament in Modern English** (1958, 1972) highly readable

Commentative

- 9 **Living Bible*** (LB–1967, 1971) easiest reading; very poor for study; changes meaning of

passages; contain vulgarisms; biased to pre-millennialism

Wuest's An Expanded Translation (1956, 1958, 1959) scholarly but anti-baptism bias; hard to read

10 **Cotton Patch Version** (1968, 1969) puts the gospel story in a twentieth century setting; only Luke, Acts, Paul's letters

Key:

* Both Old and New Testaments now available

Author's choice for the best in each group; 9 & 10 not recommended

N.B. *literalness is not necessarily an indication of accuracy*

All rankings as to literalness are a subjective judgment of [Bruce Terry](#), who has read most of these.

Many of these can be found [on-line](#), thanks to Susan Moe

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<http://www.ovc.edu/terry/interpretation/translat.htm>

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