

Choosing a Bible for College Study

1. There are many English translations available. For college classes, I recommend **formal correspondence translations**, which strive to stay as close as possible to a word-for-word translation from the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts:

- King James Version (KJV) and the New King James Version (NKJV). The KJV is the first version of Scripture authorized by the Protestant church and commissioned by England's King James I in 1611. If you have interest in English literature and the literary use of the Bible, you may want to read the KJV, which remains a stunning, classic English translation. If you are looking for a more contemporary translation, choose one of the following:
- Revised Standard Version (RSV) and New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). Protestant translations sponsored by the National Council of Churches in the tradition of the KJV.
- New International Version (NIV) and Today's New International Version (TNIV). Evangelical Protestant.
- New Jewish Publication Society (NJPS). Jewish translation of the Hebrew Scriptures only.
- The New American Bible (NAB), Roman Catholic translation, combines formal correspondence and dynamic equivalence.

The other translation approach is called "dynamic equivalence," which strives to translate the meaning of the ancient texts. These translations often are easier and more enjoyable to read, but you should be aware that the translators have made many interpretive decisions. Dynamic equivalence translations include the Good News Translation (GNT), the Contemporary English Version (CEV), and the Revised English Bible (REB). The CEV is written at a grade-school level. The REB is a British English translation.

2. Some students may want to invest in a study Bible. There are many types of study Bibles available. For college classes, I recommend study Bibles that provide historical and cultural background information. *Keep in mind that all study Bibles have a bias. If you use any study Bible, do not confuse the editorial notes and commentary with the text itself.*

- *The Catholic Study Bible Second Edition*, edited by Donald Senior and John Collins (Oxford University Press, 2nd ed., 2006). ISBN-10: 0195282809. ISBN-13: 978-0195297751. \$49.99 list price. Scholarly, Catholic perspective.
- *The HarperCollins Study Bible: Fully Revised & Updated*, edited by Harold W. Attridge (HarperOne, Rev. ed., 2006). ISBN-10: 006078685X. ISBN-13: 978-0060786854. \$44.99 list price. Scholarly, historical approach.
- *The Literary Study Bible. English Standard Version*. Edited by Leland Ryken (Crossway, 2007). ISBN-10: 1581348088. Literary-critical approach that is theologically on the conservative side. \$49.99 list price.
- *The New Interpreter's Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version With the Apocrypha*, edited by Walter J. Harrelson (Abingdon Press, 2003). ISBN-10: 0687278325. \$48.00 list price. Scholarly, on more liberal end of spectrum.
- *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha: New Revised Standard Version*, edited by Michael Coogan (Oxford University Press, 4th ed., 2010). ISBN-10: 0195289552. ISBN-13: 978-0195289558. \$45.00 list price. Scholarly, historical approach, on the more liberal end of the spectrum theologically.
- *The Peoples' Bible. NRSV with the Apocrypha*. Edited by Curtiss Paul De Young et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009). ISBN-10: 0806656255. \$45.00 list price. Highlights the way people read the Bible today within different cultural contexts.

For Rel 225, The Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East, you could purchase a Jewish study Bible:

- The Jewish Study Bible, edited by Adele Berlin (Oxford University Press, 2004). ISBN-10: 0195297512. \$45.00 list price. Reflects Jewish interpretive tradition.

The list price is for the hardbound editions. Paperbound editions are also available. An older edition of one of these Bibles would be fine to use. I recommend BetterWorldBooks (<http://www.betterworldbooks.com/>), ABEBooks (<http://www.abebooks.com/>), and Biblio.Com ([http://www. Biblio.com](http://www.Biblio.com)) for used and new books. Amazon and Barnes & Noble both offer good discounts, if you like shopping at either of those stores.