BIBLE Study Templates
Inductive Bible Study

God's eternal, inerrant Word is your guidebook for all of life, and inductive study gives you the key to understanding that guide. Inductive study, a method that brings you directly to the Word of God apart from another's understanding or interpretation of the text, involves three skills: observation, interpretation, and application.

1. Begin with Prayer
   Prayer is often the missing element in Bible study. You are about to learn the most effective method of Bible study there is. Yet apart from the work of the Holy Spirit, that's all it will be—a method.

2. Ask the "5 W's and an H"
   As you study any passage of Scripture, train yourself to constantly ask: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? These questions are the building blocks of precise observation, which is essential for accurate interpretation.

3. Mark key words and phrases (see figure at left)
   A key word is one that is essential to the text. Key words and phrases are repeated in order to convey the author's point or purpose for writing. For example, notice that some form of the word suffering is used three times in 1 Peter 5. Key words can be marked using symbols, colors, or a combination of the two.

4. Make lists
   Making lists can be one of the most enlightening things you do as you study. Lists reveal truths and highlight important concepts. 1 Peter 5:2, for example, contains a simple list regarding the role of the elder, shown by numbering the items in the text. It is also helpful to make a list of what you learn about each key word or person you mark.

5. Watch for contrasts and comparisons
   Contrasts and comparisons use highly descriptive language to make it easier to remember what you've learned. For example, Peter compares the devil to a roaring lion in verse 8. Peter also contrasts God's attitude toward the proud and the humble.

6. Note expressions of time
   The relationship of events in time often sheds light on the true meaning of the text. Marking them will help you see the sequence or timing of events and lead to accurate interpretation of Scripture.

7. Geographic Locations
   Often it's helpful to mark geographical locations, which tell you where an event takes place.

8. Mark terms of conclusion
   Words such as "therefore," "thus," and "for this reason" indicate that a conclusion or summary is being made. You may want to underline them in the text.

9. Identify chapter themes
   The theme of a chapter will center on the main person, event, teaching, or subject of that section of Scripture. Themes are often revealed by reviewing the key words and lists you developed. Try to express the theme as briefly as possible, using words found in the text.

The Inductive Marking Approach

IN THE EPistles, MARK EVERY REFERENCE TO THE AUTHOR IN ONE COLOR, AND EVERY REFERENCE TO THE RECIPIENTS IN ANOTHER

IDENTIFY LIGHTS

MARK KEY WORDS AND PHRASES, SUCH AS GOD, CHRIST, GROWTH, SUFFERING

MARK CONTRASTS

MARK TERMS OF CONCLUSION

MARK COMPARISONS

MARK EXPRESSIONS OF TIME

DOUBLE-UNDERLINE IN GREEN ALL GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATIONS

MAKE LISTS FROM KEY WORDS AND PEOPLE—COMPILE IN THE MARGIN

Chapter 5 Thither Be-Humble & Sober: Resist & Stand Firm

5 Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elders and witnesses of our Lord's suffering and as those who are younger also of the glory that is to be revealed,

5 To be like those who were therefore, may exhort at the proper time,

7 casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

8 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is good and acceptable and perfect for God.
INTERPRETATION  discover what it means

While observation leads to an accurate understanding of what the Word of God says, interpretation goes a step further and helps you understand what it means. As you seek to interpret the Bible accurately, the following guidelines will be helpful:

1 Remember that context rules.
   If you lay the solid foundation of observation, you will be prepared to consider each verse in the light of the surrounding verses, the book in which it is found, and the entire Word of God. As you study, ask yourself: Is my interpretation of this passage of Scripture consistent with the theme, purpose, and structure of the book in which it is found? Is it consistent with other Scripture about the same subject? Am I considering the historic and cultural context? Never take a Scripture out of its context to make it say what you want it to say. Discover what the author is saying; don’t add to his meaning.

2 Always seek the full counsel of the Word of God.
   When you know God’s Word thoroughly, you will not accept a teaching simply because someone has used one or two isolated verses to support it. You will be able to discern whether a teaching is biblical or not. Saturate yourself in the Word of God; it is your safeguard against wrong doctrine.

3 Remember that Scripture will never contradict Scripture.
   Remember, all Scripture is inspired by God. Therefore, Scripture will never contradict itself. Sometimes, however, you may find it difficult to reconcile two seemingly contradictory truths taught in Scripture, such as the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. Don’t take a teaching to an extreme that God doesn’t. Simply humble your heart in faith and believe what God says, even if you can’t fully understand or reconcile it at the moment.

4 Don’t base your convictions on an obscure passage of Scripture.
   An obscure passage is one in which the meaning is unclear or not easily understood. Because these passages are difficult to understand even when proper principles of interpretation are used, they should not be used as a basis for establishing doctrine.

5 Interpret Scripture literally.
   God spoke to us that we might know truth. Therefore, take the Word of God at face value—in its natural, normal sense. Look first for the clear teaching of Scripture, not a hidden meaning. Understand and recognize figures of speech and interpret them accordingly.

   Consider what is being said in the light of its literary style. For example, you will find more similes and metaphors in poetical and prophetic literature than in historical or biographical books. Interpret portions of Scripture according to their literary style.

   Some literary styles in the Bible are: Historical—Acts, Exodus; Prophetic—Revelation, Isaiah; Biographical—Luke; Didactic (teaching)—Romans; Poetic—Psalms; Epistle (letter)—2 Timothy; Proverbial—Proverbs

6 Look for the single meaning of the passage.
   Always try to understand what the author had in mind when you interpret a portion of the Bible. Don’t twist verses to support a meaning that is not clearly taught. Unless the author of a particular book indicates that there is another meaning to what he says, let the passage speak for itself.

APPLICATION  discover how it works

The first step in application is to find out what the Word of God says on any particular subject through accurate observation and correct interpretation of the text. Once you understand what the Word of God teaches, you are then obligated before God to accept that truth and to live by it.

Scripture will always teach what is right, show us where we are wrong, how to correct, and train us in right living; so that we are complete, fully equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

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INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY OVERVIEW
The Inductive Method of Bible Study - The Basics

Kay Arthur

Inductive Bible study consists of three component parts, which we will look at separately, but which frequently overlap in practice. These three parts are observation, interpretation, and application.

**Observation answers the question: What does the passage say?** It is the foundation which must be laid if you want to accurately interpret and properly apply God's Word. Have you ever read a book, chapter, or verse of the Bible and five minutes later been unable to remember anything you have read? So often we read the Bible with our eyes but not with our mind. There are several reasons for this. Either

- we think God's Word will magically make an impression on us without any effort on our part, or
- we don't really believe we can understand what we've read, or
- we are waiting for the pastor to teach on this section of Scripture so we'll know what to believe.

Often, however, we forget what we have read simply because we don't know what to look for in the text. Therefore, in the first part of this book you are going to learn what to look for when you read your Bible.

Because observation is discovering what the passage is saying, it requires time and practice. You'll discover that the more you read and get to know a book of the Bible, the more its truths will become obvious to you. You'll be awed at the wealth of spiritual riches contained in even the shortest books of the Bible—and you will have discovered it yourself! You will know that you know!

**Interpretation answers the question: What does the passage mean?** And the basis for accurate interpretation is always careful observation. Interpretation is the process of discovering what the passage means. As you carefully observe Scripture, the meaning will become apparent. However, if you rush into interpretation without laying the vital foundation of accurate observation, your understanding will be colored by your presuppositions—what you think, what you feel, or what other people have said, rather than what God's Word says.

Interpretation is not necessarily a separate step from observation, for often, as you carefully observe the text, at that very moment you begin to see what it means. Thus, interpretation flows out of observation.

However, interpretation can also involve separate actions or steps that go beyond merely observing the immediate text. One of these exercises is investigating cross-references. First and foremost, let Scripture interpret Scripture. You may also use other helps, such as word studies or the evaluation of resources such as commentaries and Bible dictionaries to check your conclusions or to supplement your understanding of the historical or cultural setting of the text.

What we are going to do is to give you principles of interpretation and offer special sections to guide you in handling different types of writing, including figures of speech, parables, and allegories. We'll also show you how to do word studies and how to use Bible study tools that will greatly enhance your learning. It's going to be exciting—and so enlightening!
Application answers the question: How does the meaning of this passage apply to me? Usually this is the first thing we want to know when we read the Bible, but proper application actually begins with belief which then results in being and doing. Once you know what a passage means, you are not only responsible for putting it into practice in your own life, but accountable if you don’t! Ultimately, then, the goal of personal Bible study is a transformed life and a deep and abiding relationship with Jesus Christ.

Application is not a third step in the inductive process. Rather, application takes place as you are confronted with truth and decide to respond in obedience to that truth. The basis for application is 2 Timothy 3:16-17:

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

When you know what God says, what He means, and how to put His truths into practice, you will be equipped for every circumstance of life. To be equipped for every good work of life—totally prepared to handle every situation in a way that honors God—is not only possible, it is God's will. And that's what you will learn how to do if you will apply these study principles. Oh, the hundreds of stories we could tell you about what God has done because people disciplined themselves to know His Word in this way. It would thrill your heart! But right now stories aren’t our purpose; getting you into the Word inductively is! Then, friend, you can tell your own story! We'd love to hear it!

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How Observation, Interpretation, and Application Relate to Each Other

Accurate interpretation and correct application rest on the accuracy of your observations. Therefore, it is vital that you develop observation skills, even if at first they seem time-consuming or you feel less than adequate and even awkward doing them. Studying inductively is a learning process that does not happen overnight. It happens by doing—doing over and over again, until the doing becomes almost a habit, and a wonderful one at that.

As you go through the inductive process, you'll sometimes find observation, interpretation, and application happening simultaneously. God can give you insight at any point in your study, so be sensitive to His leading. When words or passages make an impression on you, stop for a moment and meditate on what God has shown you. Bring the plumb line of truth against what you believe and how you are living.

When you know what God says, what He means, and how to put His truths into practice, you will be equipped for every circumstance of life.

Through a diligent study of God’s Word, under the guidance of His Spirit, you'll drop a strong anchor that will hold in the storms of life. You will know your God. And when you know your God, not only will you be strong, but you will do great exploits for Him (Daniel 11:32).

Kay Arthur and her husband, Jack, are the founders of Precept Ministries International. This ministry reaches hundreds of thousands of people internationally through “Precept Upon Precept” Bible studies and Kay's radio and television program Precepts for Life. Kay is the bestselling author of more than 100 books and Bible studies, and is also the active spokeswoman for The New Inductive Study Bible.

Article adapted from How to Study the Bible by Kay Arthur (Harvest House Publishers © 2001.)
God  love  Law  repent  contrast  Satan

Jesus Christ  Holy Spirit

Instructions  God's word  Sound Doctrine

Expression of time  "when", "then", etc

"This thing is just like this thing here"

Comparison

2:3  Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier

"like", "as"

of Christ Jesus

Conclusion/caused effect/result

For, so, therefore

1:7  For God has not...

1:8  Therefore, do not...
1 John 1 Observation Sheet

1 John 1:1 ESV
That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life--

1 John 1:2 ESV
the life was made manifest, and we have seen it and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us--

1 John 1:3 ESV
that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

1 John 1:4 ESV
And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

1 John 1:5 ESV
This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

1 John 1:6 ESV
If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

S.P.E.C.K.: Sin to avoid, Promise to claim, Example to follow, Command to obey. How can this passage increase my Knowledge of GOD?
[1 John 1:7 ESV]

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

[1 John 1:8 ESV]

If we say, we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

[1 John 1:9 ESV]

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

[1 John 1:10 ESV]

If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

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### Scripture:

- To whom was the scripture written?
- Who are the main persons mentioned in the scripture?
- What is the overall message of the passage?
- In what way is GOD revealed in this passage? (Father, Son, Spirit, Trinity, Characteristics)
- If the passage is short enough you can paraphrase it (great way of making sure you get it)
- You could also make it personal: "God so loved ME that he gave his only begotten Son..."

### Observations:

- Words or phrases repeated or stressed?
- Commands to follow?
- Promises from GOD?
- List of Contrast? (GOD is like, we are like; The righteous are, the unrighteous are...)
- Errors to avoid?
- Truths to believe?
- Other observations?

Other observation questions: **S.P.E.C.K.:** Sin to avoid, Promise to claim, Example to follow, Command to obey, How can this passage increase my Knowledge of GOD?

### Applications:

- Scripture that I should memorize? (Scripture that summarize the theme of the passage.)
- Things that I can do that I have not been doing or have quit doing.
- Things that I should stop doing?
- How I can share what I have learned to help someone else? Who I plan to share it with?
- How my perspective should change based on what I have learned.

### Prayer:

- Things to pray about? People to pray for?
- End in prayer (just as you should begin in prayer).

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