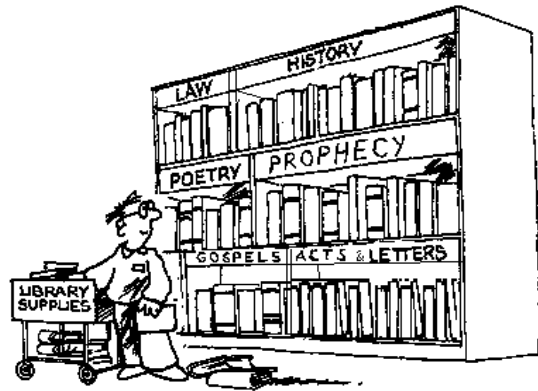


UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE – A CHECKLIST

What type of writing is this?

- Law
- Narrative
- Prophetic writing
- Psalm
- Wisdom
- Gospel
- Letter
- Apocalypse



What is the situation of the speaker / writer?

What is the situation of his / her hearers / readers?

What is the writer's intention?

- Inform?
- Challenge?
- Encourage?
- Warn?
- Stimulate thought?

Are there other details I need to know?

- Historical background?
- Customs and beliefs?
- Meaning of words?
- Grammar and structure?

How does this passage relate to the surrounding verses?

- Does it stand alone?
- Is there a developing strand of thought?
- What is its place within the structure of the whole book?

What is the most obvious meaning of the passage?

Are there other parts of the Bible that I need to consider?

- Parallel passages, quotes and allusions, use of imagery?

How might my own situation – beliefs, church affiliation, life experience, mood – affect my understanding?

Who are my listeners?

- What are their concerns and interests?
- In what way might these predispose them to ignore or overemphasise certain aspects of the text?

What does this passage say to them?

- How might it challenge their prejudices and blind spots?
- How might it remind them of truths relevant to their situation?
- How might it encourage them at the point of felt need?