

# Video Script Chapter 8: MAST Preparation: Quality Assessment

## Video 8.1

One useful tool we've found to help ensure a translation meets the community standard is a Quality Assessment Guide. Let's talk a little bit about what this assessment is and how you can build one to ensure quality in the completed work.

Scripture checking has traditionally relied on an expert's opinion about the translation, even though different experts might think differently. In that model, the standard for a quality translation is subject to one person's view.

**Wycliffe Associates is not the owner of the translation in any language. In addition, you're the experts in your heart language. We believe the local church owns the translation and are the most qualified to affirm both quality and naturalness in their heart language.**

Our desire is to help translators have a standard they have agreed on, which they can use when measuring the quality of their translated Scripture.

Globally accepted qualities will provide a starting point for a Quality Assessment Guide.

There are globally accepted standards that translators, consultants, and other organizations all over the world use to affirm quality in Scripture translation. Sometimes these standards are discussed, but not clearly defined or directly applied to translation.

**A Quality Assessment Guide helps to make sure the standards of quality are clear and understood by everyone.**

**What is a Quality Assessment Guide?**

- The Guide is simply a list of **qualities with definitions** that will help you ask the right **questions to check your translation**. It answers the question, "What makes a good translation?"
- The Guide will provide the translation team with an objective standard. **All translators must be committed to meet this standard as they translate and check their translation.** They become familiar with the standard before translating. Then they use the standard during the MAST checking steps and during the refinement process to assess the quality of their work.
- **We start with the globally accepted qualities.** Each language community may also add its own standards for what their translation needs in order to be a good quality translation. They would add to it by taking their **ideas** about "what makes a good translation?" and applying **definitions to those ideas**. The definitions are used to **create questions** about the quality of the translation.

**When you train teams of translators, a Quality Assessment Guide should be completed before translation begins. Your Guide should include these globally accepted**

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standards, but you will want to involve the entire translation team in reviewing and adding to the list if they desire.

You will want to translate your Quality Assessment Guide into the heart language of your community before sharing it with others.

## Video 8.2

Most churches and translation organizations around the world agree that translation standards should include these qualities:

1. Accurate
2. Correct style
3. Clear
4. Natural
5. Faithful
6. Historical
7. Grammatically correct

**Let's take time to discuss each one.** While everyone would agree that a translation needs to be accurate and clear, people have different definitions of what those terms mean.

Your entire translation team will need to understand what each quality means, so they will understand how each quality directs their work.

**Take a moment to consider how you would define “accurate”.**

**I will share definitions of each standard, but remember that your team will want to discuss these definitions to make sure that they accurately communicate each standard for your people group. You may want to re-word some of them.**

**1. “Accurate” can be defined as, “The meaning of the translation is the same as the meaning of the source text.”**

**This means that:**

- Nothing is added.
- Nothing is missing.

**2. Correct style—The translation uses the same style as the source text.**

- Poetry is expressed as poetry, narrative (story) as narrative, etc.
- Prophecy is not explained.
- Teaching sounds like teaching.
- The tone (or emotion) is consistent with the source text.

**3. Clear—The language and wording are simple and direct.**

- When read, its meaning is easy to understand.

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4. **Natural**—The translation uses language and style that is common.
  - The translation sounds the way people talk or write.
5. **Faithful**—The translation does not favor one opinion over another in theology.
  - There is no denominational bias, such as adjusted wording to support a particular baptism practice.
6. **Historical**—The translation maintains the geography, environment, and time of the source text.
  - Names of people and places are consistent and correct.
  - Plants and animals are accurate to the historical environment of the Scripture.
7. **Grammatically correct**—The grammar and punctuation of the target language is consistent and correct.
  - Capitalization and punctuation rules are followed.
  - Spelling and grammar are correct.

### Video 8.3

Here are some questions to guide your community in checking for each standard in your translation.

Questions for **accurate**:

1. Does the text in your language say the same thing as the source text?
2. Has anything been added?
3. Is any information missing?

Questions for **correct style**:

1. Does this passage sound like a story (If it is a narrative portion) or a poem (if it is poetry) or teaching (if it is an epistle) or prophecy (if it is Revelation)?

Questions for **clear**:

1. Does the translation use common, simple words?
2. Is the meaning easy to understand?
3. Is the message presented the way our language would present such a message?

Questions for **natural**:

1. When read, does the translation sound like people talk or write in your language?
2. Is it easy to read?
3. Does it read smoothly?

Questions for **faithful**:

1. Does the translation adjust words or wording to imply a theological bias?
2. Does the translation avoid explaining what the source text leaves unclear?
2. Does the passage add “church” words or phrases that are not in the source text?

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### Questions for **historical**:

1. Are names of places kept the same as the source text?
2. Are any words about the setting, such as names for plants and animals, correct for the original environment? (For example, a fig tree is called a fig tree and not some other kind of tree.)
3. Are weights, measures, dates, and other historical words represented equally and consistently?

### Questions for **grammatically correct**:

1. Is all capitalization correct? (Consider names of people and places, first word of sentences, and other capitalizations according to your grammar rules.)
2. Is the proper format for quotes (the exact words people spoke) used?
3. Is proper end punctuation used?
4. Are all words spelled correctly?
5. Are all verses marked?
6. Are the paragraphs marked/indented?