

Summary of Traina's "Aids to Observation in General"

(Traina, pp. 72-79)

- A. Use a pen or pencil
- B. One type of observation begins with the particulars and moves to the whole. The second kind begins with a survey of the whole, then notes the particulars.
- C. Avoid two errors: seeing the whole without attention to details, and seeing details and missing the whole.
- D. Scan longer passages several times looking for different details:
- key terms
 - chief persons, places, events
 - structural units
- It is often helpful to name sections to organize a longer passage.
- E. Underline, circle, etc., major observations to organize observations.
- Give specific chapter and verse references for each observation.
- F. Record noteworthy observations.
- G. Make notes about observations to help remember later what you saw as significant.
- H. Note the terms, structure, literary form, and atmosphere of the passage, and how they intermingle.
- I. Observe every passage as if you had never seen it before.
- J. Discipline yourself to see how many different observations you can make on a given passage. Learn to spend hours in the process of observation.
- K. It is frequently helpful to contrast what is found in a passage to that which might be found there but is not.
- L. Ask the questions: *What?, Where?, When?, How?, Why?, Who?*
- M. Note significant omissions as well as the events and ideas which are included.
- N. Compare and contrast observations.
- O. Compare and contrast similar or parallel passages.
- P. Compare and contrast different translations.
- Q. Think of writing a newspaper report, or painting a picture of a passage.
- R. Make rough maps of the action or events in a passage.
- S. Note the character of the persons in the passage, especially their concept of and attitude toward God.
- T. In epistles, note the writers, characteristic and problems of the recipients, answers given to their problems.
- U. Note marginal readings or alternate translations in the footnotes.
- V. Look for concepts of God, Christ, man, sin, and redemption, since these represent the primary themes of scripture.
- W. Name the paragraphs to get the overview of the action or the flow of an argument.
- X. Observation should result in some significant discoveries, but not be construed as to include the whole study process. The purpose is to become aware of the terms, structure, literary form, and atmosphere of the passage.