

Step 1 - Know the author –

1. Who wrote this book?
2. What is his relationship to the audience?
3. What is his tone?

Step 2 - Know the audience

1. What was going on in their world historically/culturally that affects our understanding of them?
2. What are the differences between me and the audience that I need to keep in mind?

Step 3 - Explore the passage

1. What type of literature is this and does it affect my understanding of the passage?
2. Is there an overall theme or point to this book?
3. Read the passage.
 - Catch the details
 - Repeating Words – words or phrases that repeat
 - Contrasts – ideas, individuals, and/or items that are contrasted with each other
 - Comparisons – ideas, individuals, and/or items that are compared w/each other
 - Cause and effect – look for cause and effect relationships
 - Figures of speech – identify expressions that convey an image, using words in a sense other than the normal literal sense.
 - Verbs – look for where the action is
 - Pronouns – identify the pronouns (I/you/he/she/it/this/our/us). Identify the antecedents for each pronoun (whom the pronoun is referring to).
 - Lists – note where the text mentions more than two items.

- Conjunctions – notice terms that join units, like “and”, “but”, “for. Note what they’re connecting.
 - Tone of the passage – what is the overall tone of the passage? (happy, sad, etc)
4. What comes before and after the passage and how does my passage fit in with the bigger picture of what’s going on in the book?

Step 4 - Discover the truth

1. What is the theological principle(s) in the text?
 - a. Remember my task is not to create the meaning but to discover it.
 - b. As God gives specific expressions to specific Biblical audiences, He is also giving universal theological teachings for all of His people through these same texts.
 - c. After reviewing the differences and identifying the similarities between the
 - d. Biblical audience and myself, I try to identify a broader theological principle reflected in the text.

Step 5 - What difference does it make?

1. What does this say about the character of God?
2. What promises are made through this text?
3. Are there any examples to follow?
4. What am I being called to do?
5. Does this make a difference in my life? Why or why not?