

To: Blue Letter Bible  
From: Amanda Ahrens  
Subject: Blue Letter Bible Website Usability  
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## **Website**

This memo's goal is to outline usability problems that individuals may run into when utilizing the study tools available on [www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org). I tested the usability of the website with five participants to see how effectively they could complete three activities.

## **Test Method**

The five participants in this test are frequent internet users; their ages range from 23 to 58. There were three women and two men among the group. The assignments chosen were designed to research the historical and cultural background of a particular person (Elisha) in a book (2 Kings) of the Bible. The test was finished alone by participants in a quiet setting. The webpage was given to the participants along with each task, subsequently. All sections of the website were open to the participants. Each tester was invited to share their choices and opinions regarding the website. Each tester was also given a follow-up interview after the test. The findings are categorized by prompts with a summarization of the observations and follow up interview answers from the testers.

## **Findings**

Two-to-ten-minute time intervals were allotted in total to locate the material for each of the three activities. The first activity was: "Look up the character profile for Elisha." This prompt was to determine the context of the character within the Bible. Four out of five testers could not find the "Character Profile" tool located on the "Home" page within the allotted time of 5 minutes. Tester 2 found the function within 3 minutes after scrolling down the "Home" page. The other four testers were stuck on the "Search the Bible" function or the gray task bar, heading the "Home" page.

The second activity was: "Retrieve the verses (2 Kings 5:8-14, 2 Kings 4:43, Hebrews 6:20) together in the ESV version, then add quotes around the verse." This prompt was to determine sections of the Bible that reference the character (Elisha). The task was completed in an average time of 3 minutes and 45 seconds by four of the testers. All four testers found the "Multiple Verse Retrieval" tool on the "Home" page. The other tester (Tester 4) could not complete the task within the time range of 10 minutes. Tester 4 was trying to use the "Search the Bible" function to pull up all the verses. Tester 4 assumed the function would take the user to the tool required for the prompt.

The third activity was: "Cite the verses in APA format." This prompt was a follow up to the second activity. The prompt facilitated the opportunity to copy citation references for the verses found on the website. Three out five testers could not find the "Cite" button located in the blue task bar on the "Multiple Verse Retrieval" page within the allotted time range of 2 minutes. These testers gravitated toward the "Advanced Options" tab located underneath the tool on the page. Tester 1 found the button within 20 seconds. Tester 4 found the button within 1 minute and 50 seconds after searching in the "Advanced Options" tab.

The follow-up interview yielded further information regarding the usability of the website. Each tester was asked about their overall impression of the website, and to grade the website on a scale from A to F. Tester 1 stated the website lacked visual appeal and did not have good organization, giving the website a C. Tester 2 stated the website labeled tools and functions incorrectly and had a poor layout, giving the website a C minus. Tester 3 stated the website lacked proper alignment with an overwhelming “Home” page and underutilized screen space, giving the website a D. Tester 4 stated the website looked outdated and unorganized, giving the website a C minus. Tester 5 stated the website’s layout and formatting was confusing, giving the website a B minus.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are based on the observations noted from all five tests and the answers to the post interview questions.

The first recommendation is to change the location of the study tools such as “Multiple Verse Retrieval” and “Character Profile.” These tools would be better located on the grey task bar that heads the website. Most testers did not scroll down the “Home” page to find these tools.

The second recommendation would be to get rid of the blue task bar and group the information into a box on the relevant pages such as “Multiple Verse Retrieval” and “Character Profile.” The testers would often assume this was related to the tools, but just another navigational bar.

The third recommendation would be to get rid of the multiple search options on the “Home” page, locating them to an isolated tool page. The testers did not understand how each search engine worked, specifically “Search the Bible” function. This tool was thought to be a general search function to navigate the website which would be a better option to exist on the “Home” page.

The last recommendation would be to create a more vibrant color palette that gives contrast to each of the functions on the website. This would allow users to intuitively find the appropriate information. The layout and organization of the website needs to be simplified on the “Home” page, removing tools which exist on other pages and useless information such as devotionals.

The usability test results and suggestions for [www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org) should be of use to the Blue Letter Bible. A well-structured website will facilitate easier application of the study resources and support the increase in website visitors.