CAPITOLO

1

Bibles, Plays and Pilgrims

"Translation it is that openeth the window, to let in the light; that breaketh the shell, that we may eat the kernel." — "The Translators to the Reader", preface to the Authorised Version (1611), spelling modernised

OBIETTIVI

1. I can describe the reigns of James I and Charles I up to 1642, explain who the Puritans were and why some of them sailed to America.
2. I can explain how the King James Bible was made, what it owes to Tyndale and why its style and phrases still matter.
3. I can analyse a psalm, a comic speech and an epitaph, explain what Jonson meant by a comedy of humours and compare him with his Latin models, Horace and Martial.
4. I can use articles at B2: general and specific meanings, groups, institutions, unique nouns and place names.
5. I can soften disagreement in a discussion and write a B2 essay from given notes.
6. I can plan my reading of long texts with a reading log.

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English 4 · Parte I · Crown and Conscience · versione 1.0
Capitolo 1: Bibles, Plays and Pilgrims · pagine 21–52 del volume completo · estratto per lo studio

In 1603 a Scottish king came south to London, and in the next forty years England changed in ways that still shape the English-speaking world. A team of scholars produced the Bible translation that generations of readers would know almost by heart; a bricklayer's stepson who had become a classical scholar filled the stage with greedy, foolish and very funny Londoners and Venetians; and thousands of English men, women and children crossed the Atlantic to build a new society where they could worship as they believed God wanted.

This chapter follows all three stories. You will read Psalm 23 in the King James Version, the opening of Ben Jonson's *Volpone* and Jonson's poem on the death of his son, and you will compare the English Bible with Giovanni Diodati's Italian one, and Jonson with the Latin poets he loved. In the Language section you will take articles to B2 level, and in the Skills section you will meet the Link Reading Club, which will follow you through the whole year.

1.1 History and Society: the Early Stuarts, 1603–1642

English 3 ended with the arrival of James VI of Scotland as James I of England in 1603, the Union of the Crowns and the Gunpowder Plot of 1605 (English 3, chapter 14). This section takes the story from there to the eve of the Civil War. Figura 1.1 sets out the main events.

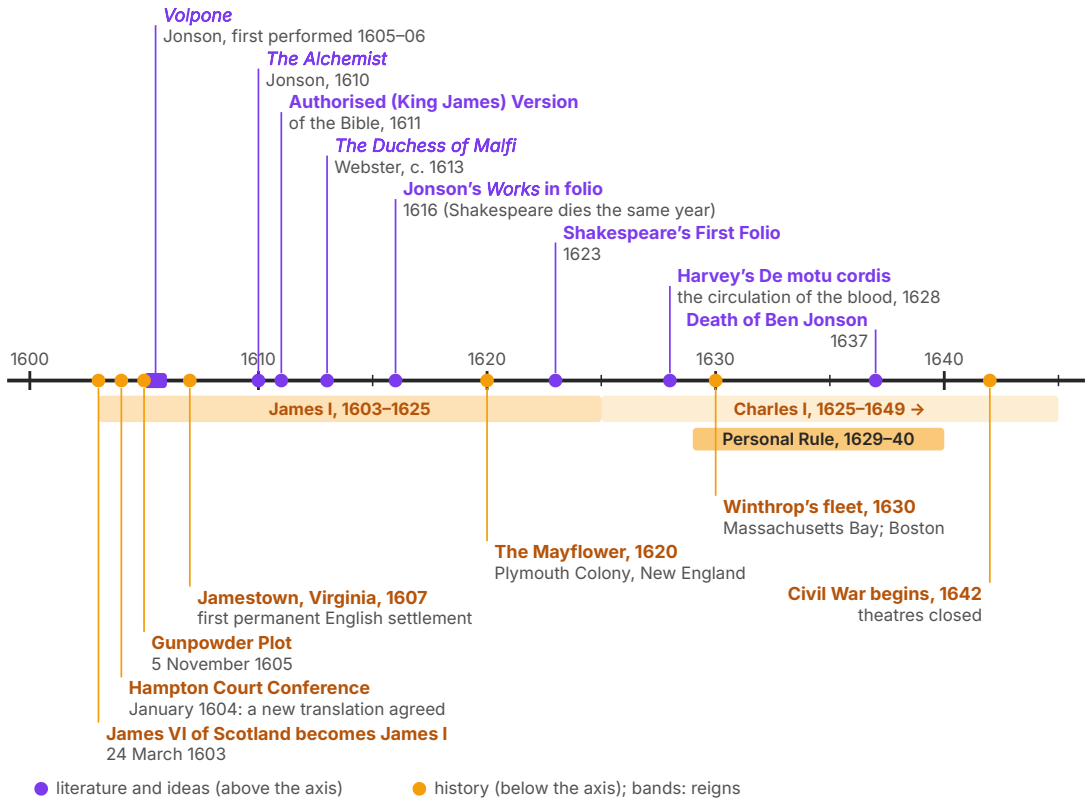


Figura 1.1 The early Stuart age on a proportional time axis, 1600–1645: literature and ideas above the axis (violet), history below (amber); the bands show the reigns of James I and Charles I and the years of the Personal Rule.

1.1.1 A king by the grace of God

James I believed that his power came directly from God. Before he came to England he had explained the idea in two books, *The True Law of Free Monarchies* (1598) and *Basilikon Doron* (1599), a book of advice for his son. This theory is called the **Divine Right of Kings** (*diritto divino dei re*): a king is God's representative on earth, he is answerable to God alone, and his subjects may never rebel against him, even when he rules badly.

In practice James had to live with Parliament, which alone could approve new taxes. His court was expensive, he was generous with gifts and titles to his favourites, and the Crown was always short of money. Parliament, in which the gentry and the merchants sat in the House of Commons, used its control of taxation to criticise the king's policies. The conflict between royal prerogative and parliamentary rights did not break out into war under James, but it grew worse under his son.

1.1.2 Puritans and the Church of England

The Church of England, as Elizabeth I had settled it, was Protestant in doctrine but kept bishops, set prayers and some old ceremonies. Many Protestants thought this reform had stopped halfway. Their enemies called them **Puritans** (*puritani*) because they wanted to "purify" the Church of everything that was not in the Bible. The name began as an insult, and the Puritans were never one organised group, but in a simplified picture they shared a few beliefs: worship should be plain, without vestments, images or elaborate music; the centre of religious life was the Bible, read at home and explained in long sermons; and God had already chosen, before the creation of the world, who would be saved. This last belief, inherited from the Geneva reformer John Calvin, is called **predestination** (*predestinazione*). It did not make Puritans passive: on the contrary, they examined their lives in diaries and in prayer, looking for signs that they were among the saved.

When James arrived, Puritan ministers presented him with a petition asking for reforms. The king called a meeting of bishops and Puritan scholars at Hampton Court Palace in January 1604. The **Hampton Court Conference** (*conferenza di Hampton Court*) gave the Puritans very little: James is reported to have summed up his position in the words "No bishop, no king", because he saw that a Church without bishops might soon want a state without a monarch. But one proposal, made by the Oxford scholar John Rainolds, pleased him: a new translation of the Bible. Its story is told in the Literature section.

1.1.3 The American colonies

Elizabeth's attempts to settle in North America had failed, but in 1607 the Virginia Company founded Jamestown, the first permanent English settlement (English 3, chapter 14). The first years were terrible: hunger, disease and conflict with the Powhatan people killed most of the early settlers. What saved the colony was a plant. From about 1612 the settler John Rolfe grew a sweet variety of tobacco and shipped it to England, where smoking was becoming fashionable, and Virginia became a land of tobacco plantations. In 1619 two events showed the two faces of its future: the first representative assembly in English America met at Jamestown, and the first enslaved Africans recorded in the colony were brought ashore.

New England had a different origin. A congregation of **Separatists** (*separatisti*) — Puritans who had given up hope of reforming the Church of England and had left it — moved from the village of Scrooby, in Nottinghamshire, to the Netherlands in 1608 and settled in Leiden in 1609. After about ten years they decided to start again in America, where they could keep their faith and their English identity. In September 1620 the *Mayflower* left Plymouth, in Devon, with 102 passengers: the Leiden group and other emigrants recruited in England, whom the Separatist leader William Bradford later called "strangers". Two centuries later these settlers came to be called the **Pilgrim Fathers** (*Padri Pellegrini*). Figura 1.2 shows their crossing.

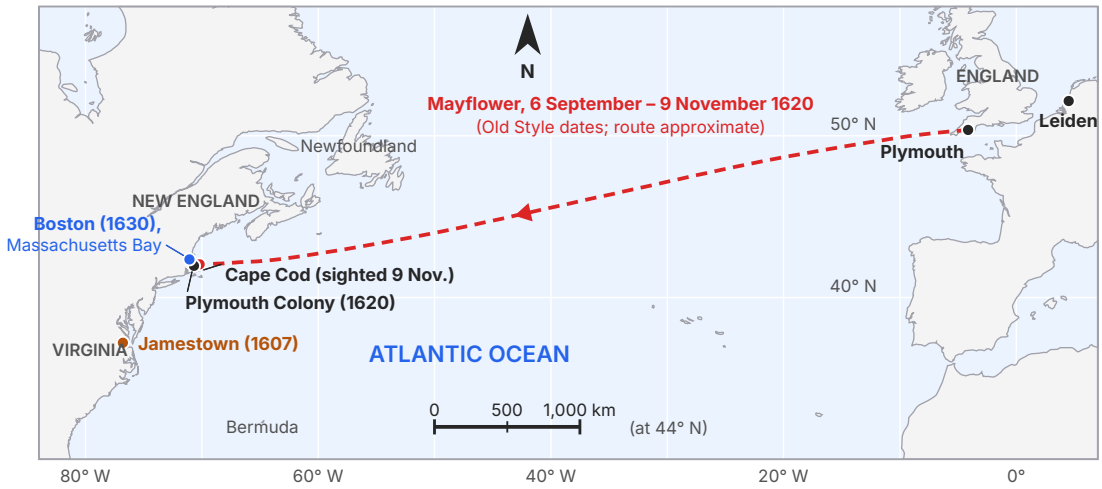


Figura 1.2 The North Atlantic in the early seventeenth century: the *Mayflower*'s crossing from Plymouth, England, to Cape Cod in 1620 (route approximate), with Jamestown, Plymouth Colony and Boston, Massachusetts Bay. Dates are Old Style (Julian calendar). Equirectangular projection; scale correct along the 44th parallel.

The ship was supposed to reach the northern part of the Virginia Company's territory, near the Hudson River, but it reached Cape Cod, outside it. Before landing, on 11 November 1620 (Old Style), 41 men signed an agreement to form a "civil body politic" and to obey the laws it would make. The **Mayflower Compact** (*patto del Mayflower*) was not a constitution, but it is often remembered as an early example of government by the consent of the governed. The settlers built Plymouth Colony on the coast of the bay. About half of them died in the first winter; the survivors learned to grow maize with the help of the Wampanoag people, whose villages had been emptied by an epidemic brought by European sailors a few years before.

A much larger wave followed. In 1630 a fleet of eleven ships led by the lawyer John Winthrop carried about 700 Puritans to Massachusetts Bay, where they founded Boston. In a sermon, "A Model of Christian Charity", Winthrop told them that the eyes of the world would be on their experiment: "wee shall be as a citty upon a hill". The sermon is known only from a manuscript copy that was not printed until the nineteenth century, so we cannot be sure exactly when and where he preached it, but the phrase has been quoted by American politicians ever since. In the 1630s, the decade of the **Great Migration** (*Grande Migrazione*), about 20,000 English men, women and children settled in New England.

ERRORE FREQUENTE

✗ *I Padri Pellegrini fondarono la prima colonia inglese in America.* ✓ La prima colonia permanente fu Jamestown, in Virginia, nel 1607: il *Mayflower* arrivò tredici anni dopo, e non in Virginia ma a Cape Cod, nel New England.

✗ *I Pellegrini sbarcarono sulla Plymouth Rock.* ✓ Lo sbarco sulla roccia è una tradizione nata più di un secolo dopo; le fonti dell'epoca parlano di Cape Cod e poi della baia di Plymouth.

1.1.4 Charles I and the Personal Rule

James died in 1625 and his son Charles I married Henrietta Maria, a French Catholic princess, the same year. Charles shared his father's belief in the Divine Right, but not his flexibility. He quarrelled with Parliament over money and war, and in 1628 Parliament forced him to accept the Petition of Right, which declared that no one should be taxed without its consent or imprisoned without a cause. In March 1629 Charles dissolved Parliament and decided to govern without it. The eleven years that followed are called the **Personal Rule** (*governo personale*), 1629–1640. The king raised money through old feudal rights and other expedients (chapter 3), while William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1633, imposed ceremonies that the Puritans saw as a return to Catholicism. Puritan writers who attacked the bishops were fined, imprisoned and mutilated; many families chose New England instead.

The Personal Rule collapsed when Charles tried to impose an English-style prayer book on Presbyterian Scotland. The Scots rebelled, the king needed an army and therefore money, and in 1640 he had to call Parliament again. Two years later England was at war with itself: that story belongs to chapter 3.

1.2 Literature: the King James Bible and Ben Jonson

1.2.1 Translating the Bible

The translation agreed at Hampton Court was organised by Richard Bancroft, who soon became Archbishop of Canterbury. About fifty scholars — 47 is the number usually given — were divided into six "companies", two at Westminster, two at Oxford and two at Cambridge, and each company translated a group of books from the Hebrew and the Greek. Their drafts were then revised by the others. A set of rules guided the work: the translators were to follow the Bishops' Bible, the official Bible of the Church of England, and alter it only where the original texts required; they could use the earlier translations of Tyndale, Coverdale and the Geneva Bible when these agreed better with the originals; and there were to be no marginal notes except to explain Hebrew or Greek words. The king did not want notes like the Geneva Bible's, some of which questioned the authority of kings.

The new Bible was printed in 1611 by Robert Barker, the King's Printer. Its title page says that it was "appointed to be read in Churches", and it is traditionally called the **Authorised Version** (*Versione Autorizzata*), or the King James Version (KJV). No record of a formal act of authorisation has survived, so the name is best understood as "so called". Nor was it the first English Bible: as Figura 1.3 shows, it was the last of a family of translations that began with Tyndale, and many readers, especially Puritans, went on preferring the Geneva Bible for decades — the Pilgrims took the Geneva Bible to America.

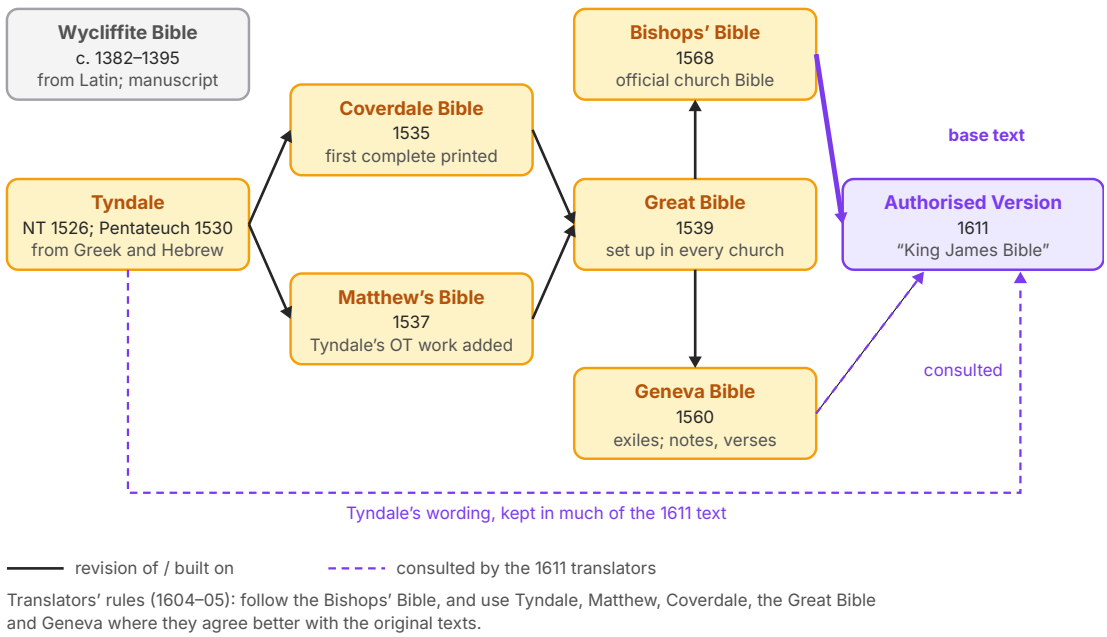


Figura 1.3 The family of English Bibles before 1611 (a family tree, not a time scale). The 1611 translators revised the Bishops' Bible and consulted the earlier versions; much of William Tyndale's wording survived through them.

The 1611 translators owed most to William Tyndale, whose New Testament of 1526 you met in English 3 (chapter 8). One modern estimate is that more than three-quarters of the King James New Testament keeps Tyndale's words. What the committees added was revision: they compared, weighed and smoothed until every verse sounded right when read aloud in church. The result has a few clear features. Its vocabulary is mostly short and Germanic (*light, word, bread, life, death*); its sentences are often joined by *and*, as in the Hebrew; and it is full of **parallelism** (*parallelismo*), the typical figure of Hebrew poetry, in which the second half of a verse repeats, completes or contrasts with the first: *He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.*

For three centuries the KJV was the book most English speakers heard every week, and its phrases entered everyday English (Tabella 1.1). Several of them were already in Tyndale; the

KJV made them familiar to everyone.

Tabella 1.1 Phrases made familiar by the King James Version (checked in the standard KJV text)

Phrase	Where	Meaning today
"the salt of the earth"	Matthew 5:13	a good, honest, reliable person
"a law unto themselves"	Romans 2:14	people who follow their own rules
"the powers that be"	Romans 13:1	the people in authority
"the skin of my teeth"	Job 19:20	*by the skin of your teeth*: only just
"a still small voice"	1 Kings 19:12	the quiet voice of conscience
"the signs of the times"	Matthew 16:3	what shows how things are changing

APPROFONDIMENTO

Old-fashioned on purpose. The language of the KJV was already a little old-fashioned in 1611. In everyday London speech the verb ending *-s* (*he leads*) was replacing the older *-eth* (*he leadeth*), and *you* was replacing *thou* even when speaking to one person. The translators kept the older forms because they were revising earlier versions, and because a slightly solemn style suited a sacred text read aloud. This is one reason why the KJV sounded timeless rather than modern to later readers.

DA RICORDARE

Authorised Version (1611): about fifty translators in six companies; based on the Bishops' Bible; deeply indebted to Tyndale; "authorised" is the traditional name, not the record of a known official act; not the first English Bible.

1.2.2 Ben Jonson: a classical comedian

Ben Jonson (1572–1637) was born in London and educated at Westminster School by the antiquarian William Camden, who gave him a lasting love of Latin authors. His stepfather was a bricklayer, and Jonson worked at his trade for a time and served as a soldier in Flanders before becoming an actor and playwright. In 1598 he killed a fellow actor in a duel; he escaped the gallows only by reading a verse in Latin, the old privilege called "benefit of clergy", and was branded on the thumb. Proud, quarrelsome and immensely learned, he was also a loyal friend: you know his poem in praise of Shakespeare in the First Folio (English 3, chapter 14).

Jonson made his name with *Every Man in His Humour* (1598), and with it a new kind of play, the **comedy of humours** (*commedia degli umori*). In old medical theory the body contained four fluids or "humours" — blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile — whose balance decided a

person's health and temperament (Figura 1.4). Jonson used the word as a metaphor: a "humour" character is dominated by one ruling passion, such as greed, jealousy or vanity, which drives all his actions "to run one way". Such characters are not psychologically complex, but they are perfect for satire, because the audience recognises the type at once and laughs at its excess.

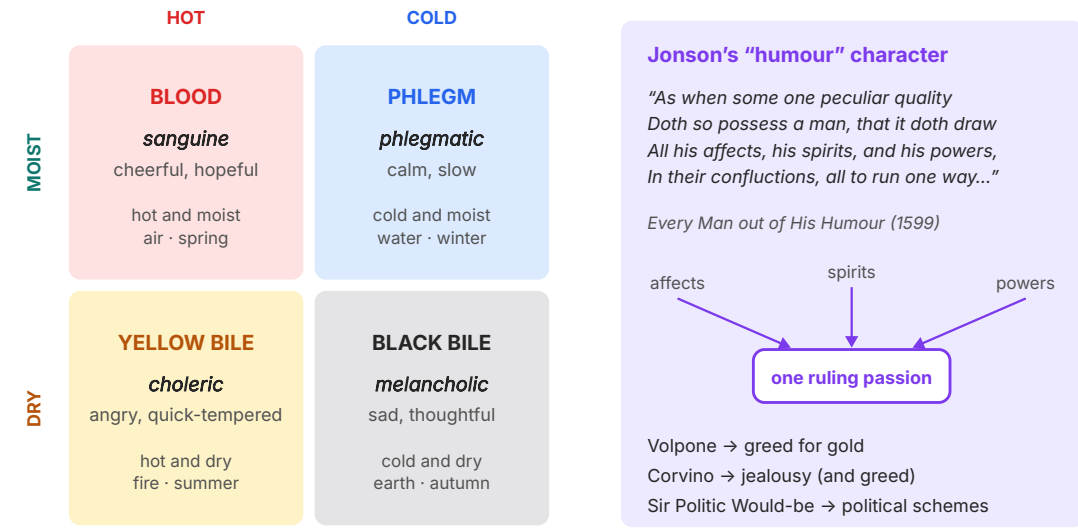


Figura 1.4 Left: the four humours of ancient and medieval medicine, with their qualities, elements, seasons and temperaments (a simplified chart of an old theory). Right: Jonson's metaphorical use of the word, from *Every Man out of His Humour* (1599; text of Project Gutenberg eBook #3695), and three humour characters of *Volpone*.

Jonson's masterpiece, *Volpone, or The Fox*, was first performed by the King's Men at the Globe in 1605 or 1606. It is set in Venice, a city that English audiences imagined as rich, refined and corrupt. Volpone, a childless Venetian gentleman, pretends to be dying, and three greedy men — a lawyer, an old miser and a merchant — bring him rich presents, each hoping to be named his heir. His servant Mosca manages the deception, and the victims go further and further: the merchant Corvino offers his own wife, Celia, to the "dying" man, and the old Corbaccio disinherits his son. In the end master and servant betray each other, and the court of Venice punishes everyone: Mosca is sent to the galleys, and Volpone is to lie in prison in irons "Till thou be'st sick, and lame indeed". The ending is moral, but what the audience remembers is the energy of the tricksters.

In *The Alchemist* (1610) Jonson moved the action to his own city. During an outbreak of plague a gentleman leaves London, and his butler Face, with the conman Subtle and their partner Dol Common, turns the empty house in Blackfriars into a workshop where "the philosopher's

stone" is promised to every customer: a greedy knight, a young clerk, a tobacco seller and two Puritans from Amsterdam, who are some of the most ridiculous figures in the play. Comedies like this, set in contemporary London among merchants, shopkeepers, lawyers and tricksters, are called **city comedy** (*commedia cittadina*). Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* (1614), set at a London fair, is another.

In 1616 Jonson did something no English playwright had done before: he published his plays, poems and masques in a large, carefully edited folio volume, *The Works of Benjamin Jonson*. Some people laughed at a man who called his plays "works", but the book showed that drama could be serious literature, and it prepared the way for Shakespeare's First Folio seven years later. The same year the king gave Jonson a pension. Jonson also wrote fine lyric poems, such as the song "Drink to me only with thine eyes", and short poems in the Latin manner of Martial: **epigrams** (*epigrammi*), brief, polished poems that end with a witty or memorable point, and **epitaphs** (*epitaffi*), poems written as if for a tombstone. Younger poets who gathered round him in London taverns proudly called themselves the **Tribe of Ben** (*la "tribù di Ben"*). When he died in 1637 he was buried in Westminster Abbey under a stone that says simply "O rare Ben Jonson".

IN SINTESI

- **Life:** 1572–1637; Westminster School; bricklayer, soldier, actor; a duel in 1598; royal pension 1616.
- **Comedy of humours:** characters ruled by one passion — *Every Man in His Humour* (1598).
- **Venice:** *Volpone* (1605–06), a beast fable of greed.
- **London:** city comedy — *The Alchemist* (1610), *Bartholomew Fair* (1614).
- **Poems:** epigrams, epitaphs, songs; the *Works* in folio (1616); the Tribe of Ben.

1.2.3 Jacobean tragedy in brief

Comedy was not the only Jacobean success. The tragedies written after Shakespeare's great period are darker, crowded with spies, poisoners and corrupt courts, often set in Italy. The finest is John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* (c. 1613, printed 1623), performed by the King's Men and based on a true story told by Matteo Bandello. The young widowed Duchess of Amalfi secretly marries her steward, and her two brothers, a cardinal and a duke, destroy her for it. After her murder her brother Ferdinand speaks one of the most famous lines of the period: "Cover her face; mine eyes dazzle: she died young" (IV.2).

COLLEGAMENTI

Medicine: the end of the humours. The theory of the four humours goes back to the Hippocratic writers of ancient Greece and to the Greek physician Galen (2nd century AD), and it ruled European medicine for about 1,500 years: illness was treated by restoring the balance, for example by bleeding a patient with "too much blood". In 1628 William Harvey, physician to James I and then to Charles I, published *De motu cordis*, which showed by experiments and measurement that the heart pumps the same blood round the body in a circuit. Galen had taught that blood was continuously made in the liver and consumed by the body. Harvey's discovery did not end humoral medicine at once, but it was one of the first great blows against it — and in English the old words survive: we still call people *sanguine*, *phlegmatic* or *melancholic*, and say that someone is *in a good humour*.

1.3 Texts: a Psalm, a Fox and a Son

The three texts of this section are very different — a sacred song, a comic speech and a father's private grief — but all three were printed within a few years of each other, and all three show how the English of 1605–1616 could be simple and grand at the same time.

1.3.1 T1 · The Authorised Version, Psalm 23

Context. The Psalms are the 150 songs and prayers of the Hebrew Bible, traditionally attributed in large part to King David, who had been a shepherd before he became king. Psalm 23 is probably the best-known passage of the KJV, read at countless funerals and weddings. The text below is the standard modern-spelling printing of the 1611 translation (Project Gutenberg eBook #10); the first printing of 1611 has older spellings.

Tabella 1.2 T1 — Psalm 23, Authorised (King James) Version, 1611; standard modern-spelling printing. Superscript figures: verse numbers.

A Psalm of David.
[1] The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
[2] He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.
[3] He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
[4] Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
[5] Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
[6] Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

Glosses. *want*: lack, be without (the old meaning); *maketh me to lie down*: makes me lie down; *still*: calm; *restoreth*: gives new strength to; *righteousness*: justice, goodness; *for his name's sake*: for the honour of his name; *rod … staff*: the shepherd's stick and crook; *anointest*: put oil on (a sign of honour for a guest); *runneth over*: is so full that it overflows; *dwell*: live.

Analysis

Form. The KJV prints the psalm as prose, but it is poetry built on parallelism. Each verse is divided by a colon (in verse 1, a semicolon) into two halves that mirror each other: *He maketh me to lie down in green pastures / he leadeth me beside the still waters*. The rhythm comes from these balanced pairs, not from metre or rhyme.

Images. The psalm develops two images of God. In verses 1–4 he is a shepherd who leads his sheep to grass and water and protects them in a dark valley; in verse 5 he is a host who welcomes a guest to his table, honours him with oil and fills his cup. The speaker moves from the open country to the safety of a house, the "house of the LORD" of the last verse.

Language. The words are almost all short and concrete — *table, oil, cup, rod, staff, waters* — and the phrase *the valley of the shadow of death* owes its power to the chain of *of* phrases. Notice the change of pronoun in verse 4: the speaker speaks *about* God (*He maketh me…*) until the moment of danger, and then speaks directly *to* him (*for thou art with me*).

1. Find the two images of God in the psalm. In which verse does the second begin?
2. Divide verses 2 and 3 into their two parallel halves. What does the second half add to the first?
3. Why do you think the speaker changes from *he* to *thou* in verse 4?
4. Which words in the psalm express abundance and generosity?

5. Translate verse 1 into modern English. What is lost in your version?

ESEMPIO SVOLTO

Writing a PEE paragraph on parallelism

Task. Write a paragraph on how parallelism creates a feeling of calm in Psalm 23.

Point. Parallelism gives Psalm 23 a slow, regular movement that suits its message of trust. **Evidence.** In verse 2, *He maketh me to lie down in green pastures* is followed by the parallel clause *he leadeth me beside the still waters*: same subject, same kind of verb, a place at the end. **Explanation.** Each half of the verse repeats the movement of the other, like two steps at the same pace, so the reader feels led rather than pushed; the pauses at the colons work like breaths. Even in the dangerous valley of verse 4 the pattern does not break, which suggests that the speaker's trust is not shaken.

Why it works. The point answers the task; the evidence is short and exact; the explanation says *how* the device produces the effect, not just that it is there.

1.3.2 T2 · Ben Jonson, *Volpone*, Act I, scene 1: "Good morning to the day; and next, my gold"

Context. These are the first lines of the play. Before the audience knows anything about Volpone, it sees him greet the morning and then, at once, his treasure. The text is that of Project Gutenberg eBook #4039, which keeps older spellings such as *shew'st* and *relick*; line numbers count the lines of the speech.

Tabella 1.3 T2 — Ben Jonson, *Volpone* (first performed 1605–06), I.1.1–13; text of Project Gutenberg eBook #4039.

A room in Volpone's house. Enter Volpone and Mosca.	
Volpone. Good morning to the day; and next, my gold:	
Open the shrine, that I may see my Saint.	
[Mosca withdraws the curtain, and discovers piles of gold, plate, jewels, etc.]	
Hail the world's soul, and mine! more glad than is	
The teeming earth to see the long'd-for sun	
Peep through the horns of the celestial Ram,	5
Am I, to view thy splendour darkening his;	
That lying here, amongst my other hoards,	
Shew'st like a flame by night; or like the day	
Struck out of chaos, when all darkness fled	
Unto the centre. O thou son of Sol,	10
But brighter than thy father, let me kiss,	
With adoration, thee, and every relick	
Of sacred treasure, in this blessed room.	

Glosses. *shrine*: a holy place where relics are kept; *teeming*: full of life, fertile; *long'd-for*: much desired; *the celestial Ram*: the constellation Aries, in which the sun stands in spring; *darkening*: making look dark (the gold is brighter than the sun); *hoards*: hidden stores of wealth; *shew'st*: you show yourself, you appear; *the centre*: the centre of the earth; *Sol*: the sun (in alchemy gold was the "child" of the sun); *relick*: relic, a sacred object.

Analysis

Form. The speech is in blank verse, the iambic pentameter of serious drama (English 3), used here for comedy. Lines 3–10 are one enormous sentence: Volpone compares his joy to the earth's joy at the spring sun, and the comparison is so long that the main verb, *Am I*, arrives only in line 6.

Language and tone. The comedy lies in the vocabulary. Volpone speaks of his gold in the language of religion: *shrine*, *Saint*, *adoration*, *relick*, *sacred*, *blessed*. He makes it brighter than the sun and compares it to the first light of the Creation (*the day / Struck out of chaos*). The first line already shows the joke: the day comes first only for a moment — *and next, my gold*. The audien-

ce is invited to admire the poetry and to judge the man: this is worship turned upside down, a humour character whose ruling passion is greed.

1. What does Mosca do between lines 2 and 3, and why does the stage direction matter?
2. Find six words from the language of religion. What is the effect of using them for gold?
3. In which two lines does Volpone say that his gold outshines the sun?
4. Why is it ironic that Volpone calls the gold *the world's soul, and mine*?
5. How does the first line of the play prepare us for the character?

1.3.3 T3 · Ben Jonson, "On My First Son"

Context. Jonson's eldest son, Benjamin, died of the plague in London in 1603, at the age of seven. The poem was printed among the *Epigrams* in the 1616 *Works*. The text is that of Henry Morley's edition (Cassell, 1892; Project Gutenberg eBook #5134), checked against a second printing; the spelling of 1616 has been modernised there.

Tabella 1.4 T3 — Ben Jonson, "On My First Son", from *Epigrams* (1616); text of Project Gutenberg eBook #5134.

Farewell, thou child of my right hand, and joy;	
My sin was too much hope of thee, loved boy;	
Seven years thou wert lent to me, and I thee pay,	
Exacted by thy fate, on the just day.	
Oh! could I lose all father, now! for why,	5
Will man lament the state he should envy?	
To have so soon 'scaped world's, and flesh's rage,	
And, if no other misery, yet age!	
Rest in soft peace, and, asked, say here doth lie	
Ben Jonson his best piece of poetry;	10
For whose sake, henceforth, all his vows be such,	
As what he loves may never like too much.	

Glosses. *child of my right hand*: a translation of the Hebrew name Benjamin, traditionally explained as "son of the right hand" (Genesis 35:18); *thou wert lent to me*: you were lent to me (a loan); *exacted*: demanded as payment; *the just day*: the exact day the loan fell due; *lose all father*: stop feeling like a father; *for why*: for what reason; *the state he should envy*: the condition (of the dead child) that he ought to envy; *'scaped*: escaped; *rage*: violence; *doth lie*: lies; *Ben Jonson his*: Ben

Jonson's (an old form of the possessive); *like*: please (old meaning: *may never please him too much*).

Analysis

Form. Twelve lines of iambic pentameter in six heroic couplets (English 3): a short, controlled form for an uncontrolled feeling. It is both an epitaph — lines 9–10 imagine the words on the tombstone — and an epigram, ending on a sharp, memorable point.

Argument. The poem moves like a reasoning. The father first blames himself: his *sin* was to hope too much (l. 2). Then he uses the image of a loan: the child was *lent* for seven years and has been taken back *on the just day* — if Benjamin died on his birthday, as many readers believe, the image is exact. Next comes Christian consolation: the child has escaped the world, the flesh and old age, so his father should envy him (ll. 5–8). But the cry *Oh! could I lose all father, now!* shows that reason cannot defeat feeling.

The ending. The boy is called his father's *best piece of poetry*, a pun on the Greek root of *poet*, "maker": Jonson made both. The final couplet draws a hard lesson: from now on he will try never to love anything too much, so as not to suffer again. The neat logic of the couplets and the pain beneath them pull against each other, and this tension is what makes the poem so moving.

1. What is the father's *sin* (l. 2)? Do you agree that it is a sin?
2. Explain the image of the loan in ll. 3–4. Which words belong to the language of money?
3. What three things has the child escaped, according to ll. 7–8?
4. Explain the double meaning of *his best piece of poetry*.
5. Is the ending a consolation or a confession of failure? Give reasons.

> **ERRORE FREQUENTE**
>
> ✗ *"Child of my right hand" vuol dire che il figlio era il suo aiutante, il suo "braccio destro".* ✓ L'espressione traduce il nome ebraico *Benjamin*, tradizionalmente spiegato come "figlio della destra" (Genesi 35,18): il bambino si chiamava come il padre, Benjamin.
>
> ✗ *Volpone è una tragedia perché finisce con una condanna.* ✓ È una commedia satirica: il finale punisce i colpevoli, ma il tono, i personaggi "a umore" e gli inganni sono comici.

1.4 Language: Articles at B2

You have used articles since English 1, and you know the basic rules: *a / an* for one thing mentioned for the first time, *the* for a thing both speakers can identify. At B2 level the difficulties are subtler, and most of them come from Italian, which uses the definite article where English uses none. Before you start, Tabella 1.5 recalls four B2 points from English 3 that the exercises of this chapter will keep active.

Tabella 1.5 English 3 at a glance: four B2 points to keep active (practise them in the exercises)

Point	Form	Example from this chapter
Past modals of deduction (English 3, ch. 3)	*must / might / can't have* + past participle	The first settlers *must have been* terrified by the winter.
Passive reporting (English 3, ch. 4)	*It is said that…* / *He is said to have…*	James *is reported to have said* "No bishop, no king".
Mixed conditionals (English 3, ch. 7)	*If* + past perfect, *would* + infinitive	If the *Mayflower had reached* the Hudson, the colony *would be* remembered differently today.
Participle clauses (English 3, ch. 8)	*-ing* / past participle / *having* + past participle	*Printed* in 1611, the KJV was read for three centuries. *Having left* Leiden, the Pilgrims sailed from Plymouth.

1.4.1 General ideas: no article

When we speak about something in general — all of it, or the idea itself — English uses **no article** (the zero article) with plural nouns and uncountable nouns:

- *Freedom matters.* · *Translation is a kind of interpretation.* · *Tobacco made Virginia rich.*
- *Puritans rejected images in churches.* (= Puritans in general) · *Colonies needed ships, tools and seeds.*
- *Life was hard in the first winter.* · *History is written by the winners.*

When the same noun is made specific — by a phrase with *of*, by a relative clause, or by the situation — it takes *the*: *the freedom of the settlers*; *the Puritans who sailed in 1630*; *the tobacco that Rolfe grew*; *the life of a settler*. The question is always: am I speaking about the whole category, or about a particular part of it?

> **GRAMMAR IN ITALIANO**
>
> **L'articolo zero.** In italiano i nomi astratti e i nomi usati in senso generale vogliono l'articolo: *La libertà è importante*; *I puritani rifiutavano le immagini*; *Il tabacco arricchì la Virginia*. In inglese, quando il senso è generale, l'articolo non c'è: *Freedom is important*; *Puritans rejected images*; *Tobacco made Virginia rich*.
>
> **Quando torna "the".** Se il nome è specificato — *la libertà dei coloni, i puritani di Boston* — l'inglese usa *the* come l'italiano: *the freedom of the settlers, the Puritans of Boston*. Chiediti: "parlo di tutti / dell'idea, oppure di questi in particolare?".

Figura 1.5 sums up the main decision as a chart. Use it when you check your writing.

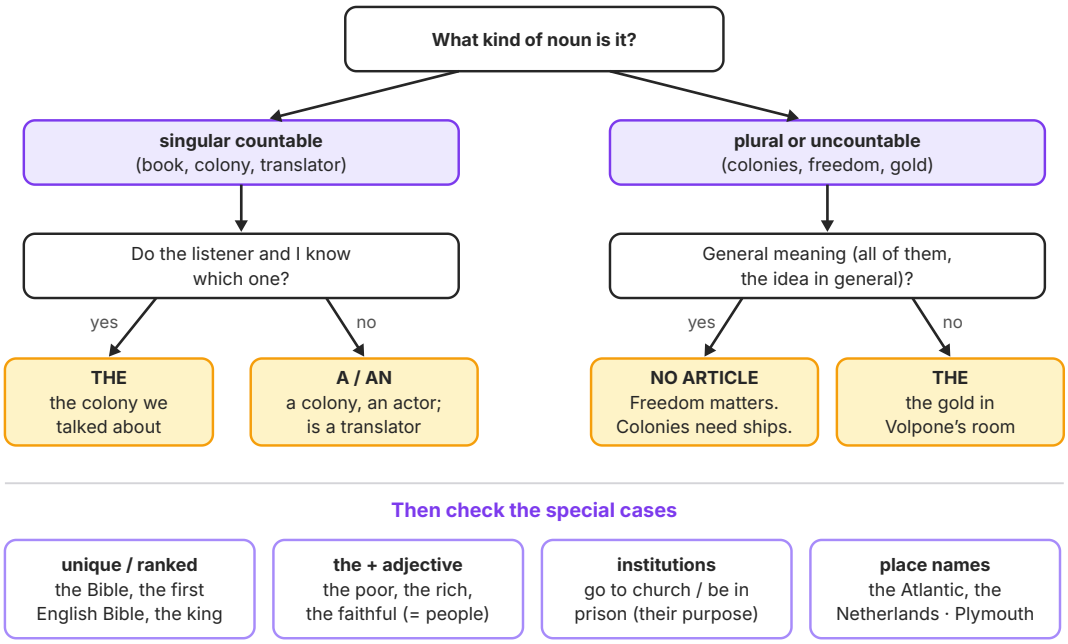


Figura 1.5 A decision chart for articles: first the kind of noun, then the meaning (specific or general), then the special cases.

1.4.2 Groups, unique things and rankings

***The* + adjective** refers to a whole group of people: *the poor, the rich, the young, the elderly, the faithful, the dead, the unemployed*. The verb is plural and the adjective never takes *-s*: *The faithful were called to prayer* (✗ *the faithfuls*). For one person, add a noun: *a poor man, a faithful servant*. Nationality adjectives in *-sh, -ch, -ese* work in the same way: *the English, the French, the Dutch* (= the people).

Things that are **unique**, in general or in their context, take *the*: *the sun, the earth, the sky, the Bible, the king* (the king of the country we are talking about), *the Church of England*. So do **superlatives and ranked nouns**: *the first permanent English settlement, the last play, the only copy, the same translation, the best-known psalm*.

1.4.3 Institutions and places

With some places that exist for a purpose — *church, school, university, college, prison, hospital, court, bed* — English uses **no article** when we mean the activity or purpose, and *the* or *a* when we mean the building: *Puritan families went to church twice on Sunday* (to worship) but *The church on the hill was full of tourists* (the building); *Jonson was in prison in 1598* (as a prisoner) but *His*

friends visited him at the prison. British English also says *go to university, be in hospital*, while American English prefers *be in the hospital*.

Geographical names follow conventions rather than logic; Tabella 1.6 gives the main ones. Note the difference between *the Netherlands* and *Leiden*, or between *the Atlantic* and *Plymouth*.

Tabella 1.6 Articles with geographical names

the	no article
oceans, seas, rivers, canals: *the Atlantic, the Mediterranean, the Thames, the Hudson*	continents, most countries, states and regions: *America, England, Italy, Virginia, New England*
plural names and groups of islands: *the Netherlands, the United States, the Bermudas*	cities, towns and villages: *Plymouth, Leiden, Boston, Venice*
countries with *Republic, Kingdom, Union*: *the United Kingdom*	single islands, lakes and mountains: *Sicily, Lake Como, Mont Blanc*
mountain ranges and deserts: *the Alps, the Sahara*	streets and most buildings named after a place or person: *Oxford Street, Westminster Abbey*

1.4.4 *A / an*, generic nouns and exclamations

English uses *a / an* where Italian uses no article in three common cases: with **jobs and roles** after *be* or *as* (*Jonson was a bricklayer before he became an actor*; *She works as a translator*), in **exclamations** with *what* + singular countable noun (*What a translation!* · *What a storm!* — but *What luck!* with an uncountable noun), and in expressions of **rate** (*three times a day, twice a week*).

When we speak about a kind of thing in general, English has three possibilities. The plural without article is the most common: *Novels became popular in the eighteenth century. The* + singular is formal and typical of writing about inventions, species and genres: *The novel was born in the eighteenth century*; *The telescope changed astronomy. A / an* + singular means "any example of": *A translator must know both languages well.*

GRAMMAR IN ITALIANO

Articolo indeterminativo dove l'italiano non lo usa. *Era insegnante → He was **a** teacher*; *Lavora come traduttrice → She works as **a** translator*; *Che traduzione! → What **a** translation!*; *due volte alla settimana → twice **a** week*.

Istituzioni. *Andare in chiesa / a scuola / in prigione* per lo scopo previsto: *go to church / school / prison*, senza articolo. Con l'articolo si parla dell'edificio: *the church on the hill*.

Gruppi. *I poveri, i fedeli → the poor, the faithful*: aggettivo invariabile, verbo plurale (*the poor **were***).

ERRORE FREQUENTE

✗ *The freedom of religion was their aim.* → ✓ *Freedom of religion was their aim.* (*of religion* dice di quale libertà si parla in generale, come *freedom of speech*; ma ✓ *the freedom that the Pilgrims found*: quella libertà in particolare)

✗ *Jonson was actor.* → ✓ *Jonson was an actor.*

✗ *The life in the colony was hard.* → ✓ *Life in the colony was hard.*

✗ *The rich people and the poors* → ✓ *the rich and the poor*

✗ *They sailed across Atlantic to the Cape Cod.* → ✓ *They sailed across the Atlantic to Cape Cod.*

1.5 Skills: Faith, Translation and Discussion

1.5.1 Vocabulary: religion, belief and translation

The words in Tabella 1.7 are useful for talking about the history of this chapter and about translation. Several have false friends in Italian: *version* in the sense of "translation" is close to the Italian *versione*, but a school translation exercise is usually called a *translation*; *faithful* means both *fedele* (to a person or a faith) and "accurate" (of a translation).

Tabella 1.7 Religion, belief and translation: key words

Word	Meaning	Example
faith (n.)	strong religious belief; trust	They kept their *faith* in exile.
scripture (n.)	the sacred writings of a religion	Puritans quoted *scripture* in every argument.
worship (v./n.)	show love and respect to God; religious services	They wanted to *worship* in their own way.
sermon (n.) · *preach* (v.)	a religious talk · give one	Winthrop *preached* a famous *sermon*.
persecution (n.)	cruel treatment because of beliefs	Some fled from *persecution*.
dissent (n./v.)	disagreement with official opinion	Religious *dissent* was a crime.
settler · *colony* (n.)	a person who goes to live in a new land · the settlement	The *settlers* founded a *colony*.
version · *rendering* (n.)	a particular translation · the way a word or passage is translated	an old *rendering* of Psalm 23
faithful · *literal* (adj.)	close to the original · word for word	A *literal* translation is not always a *faithful* one.

Word formation: prefixes of time and attitude

Four prefixes are particularly common in history and politics (Tabella 1.8). Before a capital letter or a vowel that could be misread, they take a hyphen: *pre-Reformation, anti-Catholic, pro-Parliament*; in long-established words they are written solid: *prehistoric, antibiotic, postpone*.

Tabella 1.8 Prefixes of time and attitude

Prefix	Meaning	Examples
pre-	before	*pre-Reformation, pre-war, prehistoric, preview*
post-	after	*post-war, post-Reformation, postgraduate, postpone*
anti-	against	*anti-Catholic, anti-slavery, antibiotic, antisocial*
pro-	in favour of	*pro-Parliament, pro-European, pro-democracy*

1.5.2 Reading: One Last Year

Read the first post on the Link Reading Club blog. Then answer: who are the four students, what will they read, and what question does Giulia ask?

Link Reading Club · One Last Year · posted by Giulia, Monday 17 September

Hello again, everyone, and welcome back! Last year the Bristol–Turin Link was a pen-friend project with a few shared assignments. This year Prof.ssa Rossi and Mrs Hill have decided to make it bigger and more serious, so from today we are officially the **Link Reading Club**. The idea is simple: our two classes will read the same four novels in English, at the same time, and discuss them here on the blog and in a video call every month.

Let me introduce the team for anyone new. I'm Giulia, from Turin, and I'm in my fourth year of liceo classico, so my week is already full of Latin and Greek. My goal for this year is a B2 certificate in the spring, which is why I've started reading everything in English, even the instructions on the cereal box. My best friend Marta, who is better at maths than at remembering deadlines, has promised to post at least once a month. We'll see.

In Bristol, Sam is starting Year 13, his last year at Hillside Academy. He's doing A levels in English Literature, History and Biology, and he wants to read English at university, so for him this club is also practice for interviews. Callum, who is in the same year, is doing maths, geography and art, and he says he joined "for the arguments, not for the books". And Aoife is back in Galway for her Sixth Year: she has the Leaving Certificate in June, and she still wants to study marine science, which explains her first question when she saw the reading list: "Why are there so many shipwrecks?"

She has a point. Here is the list. In the autumn we start with *Robinson Crusoe*, a man shipwrecked on an island for twenty-eight years, most of them alone. In winter comes *Gulliver's Travels*, another voyage that goes very wrong. In spring we will read *Pride and Prejudice*, where the only storms are in the drawing room, and we will finish with *Frankenstein*, which opens with

the letters of an explorer sailing towards the North Pole. Mrs Hill says the list follows the history of the novel from its beginnings to the Romantic age. Callum says it follows the history of bad decisions.

How will it work? Every month one of us chooses a question and writes the first post; the others answer, agree, disagree and quote the text. Prof.ssa Rossi has asked us to keep a reading log: for every session we write the date, the pages, the key event and one quotation we liked. I was sceptical, but last night I filled in the first page, and I can already see that it will be useful when we have to write essays.

We have also started a small debate that I want to continue here. In class we compared Psalm 23 in the King James Bible with the Italian version by Giovanni Diodati. Elena thinks a translation should be as faithful as possible, even if it sounds strange. Sam, on the other hand, says the King James translators were great because they cared about the sound of every sentence. I'm somewhere in between: I read *Robinson Crusoe* in Italian when I was twelve, and I'm curious to see how different it feels in English.

So here is our first question for the club: should a translation be faithful or beautiful? Post your answer below — in English, please, and with an example. And the most important news of all: in the spring the Bristol group is coming to Italy. One last year together, and it starts now.

1.5.3 Speaking: agreeing and disagreeing at B2

At B2 level the challenge is not to say *I agree* or *I disagree*, but to disagree politely, to agree only in part, and to keep the discussion going. English speakers often soften disagreement: they recognise the other person's point first, use tentative verbs (*I'm not sure, I'm not entirely convinced*) and add a reason.

Tabella 1.9 Useful language — agreeing and disagreeing at B2

Function	Expressions
Agreeing strongly	I couldn't agree more. · That's exactly what I think. · You've hit the nail on the head.
Agreeing in part	I agree up to a point, but… · That's true to some extent. · You may be right about…, but…
Softening disagreement	I see your point, but… · I'm not entirely convinced that… · I'm not sure I'd go that far. · I take your point, but I still think…
Disagreeing firmly (but politely)	I'm afraid I really can't agree. · I see it quite differently. · With respect, I don't think that's the case.
Asking for opinions	What's your take on this? · Where do you stand on…? · Would you agree that…?
Keeping the floor / coming back	Can I just finish my point? · Going back to what you said about…

1. **Pair work.** “Should a translation be faithful or beautiful?” Student A defends faithfulness, Student B beauty. Speak for two minutes each, then try to reach a compromise. Use at least two expressions of partial agreement and two of softened disagreement.
2. **Group discussion.** In groups of four, discuss one of these statements for five minutes: *Reading a book in translation is not really reading it. · Old texts should be modernised so that young people can read them. · People should be free to leave their country to practise their beliefs.* One student chairs and makes sure everyone speaks.

1.5.4 Writing: a B2 essay with given notes

In this essay type you are given a question and some notes — usually two points to discuss — and you add a third point of your own. You must reach a clear conclusion. Write 200–250 words in a formal, neutral register. Read the task and the model.

Task. *Your class has discussed the translation of great books. Write an essay: “Translating a great book: should the translator be faithful or free?” Write about: 1. readers who want to know exactly what the author wrote; 2. the style and beauty of the translation; 3. your own idea.*

Tabella 1.10 Model text — an essay with given notes

Translating a great book: faithful or free?

When a great book is translated, the translator faces a difficult choice: to follow the original word by word, or to write freely in order to sound natural. In my view, the best translations are faithful to the meaning, but free in the words.

On the one hand, readers have a right to know what the author actually wrote. A translation that changes or adds ideas is no longer the author’s book. This matters especially for sacred and legal texts, where every word can be important.

On the other hand, a literal translation can be unreadable. The translators of the King James Bible did not translate word for word; they revised every verse until it sounded right when read aloud, and that is why many of their phrases are still used today. A translation that is accurate but ugly will simply not be read.

Furthermore, a translation is always written for a particular time. Giovanni Diodati’s Italian Bible and the King James Version were both written in the language of the early seventeenth century, and their style now seems old-fashioned. Every generation therefore needs new translations, which can be faithful in different ways.

In conclusion, I believe a good translator should be faithful to the meaning and the tone of the original, but free to choose the words that make it live in another language. (225 words)

Structure. Paragraph 1 introduces the question and states the writer’s opinion (thesis statement). Paragraph 2 discusses note 1, paragraph 3 note 2; both open with a clear topic sentence and contain one example. Paragraph 4 adds the writer’s own idea (time and change). The conclusion answers the question with a balanced but clear position. Notice the linkers *On the one*

hand… On the other hand, *Furthermore*, *therefore*, *In conclusion*, and the zero article in general statements: *Readers have a right…*; *Every generation needs new translations*.

- Have I written about both notes and added a clearly different idea of my own?
- Is my opinion clear in the introduction and in the conclusion?
- Does each paragraph start with a topic sentence, and does it contain an example?
- Have I used formal linkers and avoided contractions and slang?
- Have I checked my articles, especially with general and abstract nouns?
- Is my essay between 200 and 250 words?

Your turn. Write an essay of 200–250 words: “Should people be free to leave their country for religious or political reasons?” Write about: 1. the right to freedom of belief; 2. the effects on the country they leave; 3. your own idea.

LEARNING TO LEARN

Planning the year: a reading log. This year you will read four whole novels in English, and long texts are forgotten quickly if you do not record them. Keep a reading log in a notebook or a document, with one line per reading session:

- **Date** and **pages** (or chapters) read;
- **key event**: one sentence on what happens;
- **one quotation** you liked or found important, with its page;
- optionally, **a question** to ask in class or on the club blog.

Ten minutes after each session are enough. Before an essay or the oral exam, your log becomes a ready-made quotation bank (English 3). The same method works for the Italian novels you read and for the Latin and Greek authors you translate: a log of *I promessi sposi*, of a speech by Cicero or of a book of Thucydides will save you hours of rereading.

1.6 Connections: Two Bibles, a Fox and a Roman Epitaph

1.6.1 Giovanni Diodati’s Italian Bible

In 1607, four years before the King James Version, an Italian Protestant Bible was printed in Geneva. Its translator, Giovanni Diodati (1576–1649), was born there into a family of Protestant exiles from Lucca and taught Hebrew and theology at the Geneva Academy; he translated from the Hebrew and Greek and published a revised edition with notes in 1641. Here is the first verse of Psalm 23:

> *Il Signore è il mio pastore: nulla mi mancherà.*

> — Giovanni Diodati, Salmo 23,1 (text of the revised edition of 1821 as printed in 1885, read on it.wikisource.org and checked against a second online Diodati text; the spelling of the 1607 and 1641 printings may differ)

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. The two versions are remarkably close: both are short, both keep the Hebrew order of the two halves, and both use a future for a promise (*mi mancherà, I shall not want*). Note the meaning of *want*: in 1611 it still meant "lack", exactly like Diodati's *mancare*; modern readers sometimes misunderstand it as "desire".

The two Bibles had very different destinies. In England the KJV became the Bible of the whole nation. In Italy, after the Council of Trent (1545–1563), reading the Bible in the vernacular required the Church's permission for about two centuries, and Diodati's translation circulated mainly among Protestants, such as the Waldensians of Piedmont. This is one reason why biblical phrases are part of everyday English much more than of everyday Italian.

1.6.2 Jonson's Venice

As far as we know, Jonson never visited Italy, but he gave his Venetians Italian animal names: *Volpone* is a big fox (*volpe*), *Mosca* a fly, *Voltore* a vulture, *Corbaccio* a raven (*corvo* with a pejorative suffix), *Corvino* a crow. The birds of prey gather round what they think is a dying animal, but the fox is only pretending — medieval bestiaries told how the fox plays dead to catch the birds that come to peck at it. The play is a *beast fable* in human form.

1.6.3 Jonson the classicist

The fable has Roman roots too. Rome knew the **legacy-hunter** (*cacciatore di eredità*; Latin *captator*), who flatters a rich old person without children in the hope of being named in the will. In Horace's *Satires* II.5, a sequel to Ulysses' visit to the seer Tiresias in the underworld (*Odyssey* XI), the ruined hero asks how to become rich again, and Tiresias teaches him this art: *captes astutus ubique / testamenta senum* (II.5.23–24: "cunningly hunt everywhere for old men's wills", translation by the editors). Scholars usually name this satire, with episodes in Petronius and Lucian, among the sources of *Volpone*.

"On My First Son" belongs to another Roman tradition. Jonson's *Epigrams* follow the model of Martial (1st century AD), who wrote several epitaphs for children. In V.34 he mourns Erotion, a little girl of his household who died six days before her sixth birthday, and entrusts her to his own dead parents in the underworld. The poem ends:

> *Mollia non rigidus caespes tegat ossa nec illi,*
> *terra, gravis fueris: non fuit illa tibi.*
>
> — Martial, *Epigrams* V.34.9–10 (text of the Latin Library, checked against the Latin Wikisource). "Let no hard turf cover her soft bones; and do not be heavy on her, earth: she was not heavy on you" (translation by the editors).

Martial reworks the formula of Roman tombstones, *sit tibi terra levis*, "may the earth be light on you", much as Jonson's epitaph turns to *Rest in soft peace* (l. 9). Both poets count the child's years and close on a sharp point, but Erotion goes to a pagan underworld, while Jonson's son is a loan returned to God: a shared genre, not a proven source. The last line is closer. Editors usually compare Martial VI.29.8, on the boy Glaucias: *Quidquid ames, cupias non placuisse nimis* (some editions read *amas*), "whatever you love, wish that it may not please you too much" (translation by the editors). Jonson's *like* keeps the Latin sense of *placere*, "to please".

1.6.4 Navigation: the *Mayflower*'s crossing

COLLEGAMENTI

Navigation and weather: the *Mayflower*'s crossing. The *Mayflower* left Plymouth on 6 September and sighted Cape Cod on 9 November 1620 — 64 days. Both dates are **Old Style**: England used the Julian calendar until 1752, which in 1620 was 10 days behind the Gregorian calendar used in Catholic Europe, so in modern terms the crossing ran from 16 September to 19 November. The shortest distance from Plymouth to Cape Cod is about 5,000 km, so the ship made good on average only about 78 km a day towards its goal — about 3 km/h, the speed of a person walking slowly.

Why so slow? In the middle latitudes the prevailing winds, the *westerlies*, blow from west to east, so a ship sailing west must often tack against them; in autumn the North Atlantic is also stormy, and according to William Bradford a main beam of the ship cracked and had to be forced back into place with a great iron screw. Navigation itself was approximate. Sailors could measure their latitude by the height of the Pole Star or of the noon Sun (English 3, chapter 14), but not their longitude, so they practised *latitude sailing*: reach the latitude of your destination, then sail due west or east along it until you see land. One degree of latitude is 60 nautical miles, about 111 km.

SINTESI

- James I (1603–1625) believed in the Divine Right of Kings; Parliament controlled taxation, and the conflict grew under Charles I, who ruled without Parliament in 1629–1640.
- Puritans wanted plain worship, sermons and the Bible, and believed in predestination; the Hampton Court Conference (1604) agreed on a new Bible.
- Jamestown (1607) was the first permanent English colony; tobacco made Virginia rich.
- The Separatists sailed on the *Mayflower* (1620), signed the Mayflower Compact and founded Plymouth Colony; Winthrop's Puritans founded Boston (1630).
- The Authorised (King James) Version (1611) revised the Bishops' Bible; much of its wording is Tyndale's.
- Its short words, *and* and parallelism, and phrases such as *the salt of the earth*, shaped English.
- Ben Jonson (1572–1637): the comedy of humours, *Volpone* (1605–06), city comedy (*The Alchemist*, 1610), the *Works* (1616).
- T1–T3: parallelism in Psalm 23; gold worshipped in *Volpone*; grief and reason in "On My First Son".
- Articles at B2: no article for general ideas; *the* + adjective for groups; no article for institutions used for their purpose; *a / an* with jobs and exclamations.
- Diodati's Italian Bible (1607, 1641) and the KJV were contemporaries; Jonson's Venetian animal names make *Volpone* a beast fable.
- Jonson the classicist: *Volpone*'s legacy-hunters go back to Horace (*Satires* II.5); "On My First Son" follows the Latin epitaph and epigram of Martial (V.34), and its last line echoes Martial VI.29.8.

ESERCIZI

History and Literature

1. ● What did James I agree to at the Hampton Court Conference (1604)?
   - **A.** To abolish the bishops
   - **B.** A new English translation of the Bible
   - **C.** To let the Puritans leave for America
   - **D.** To call Parliament every year

2. ● Which was the first permanent English settlement in America?
   - **A.** Plymouth Colony
   - **B.** Boston
   - **C.** Jamestown
   - **D.** Roanoke

3. ● Where is *Volpone* set?

   A. London
   B. Amsterdam
   C. Amalfi
   D. Venice

4. ●● True or false? Correct the false statements. a The Authorised Version was the first complete English Bible. b The 1611 translators were told to follow the Bishops' Bible. c The *Mayflower* landed in Virginia, as planned. d The Mayflower Compact was signed before the settlers landed. e "Puritan" was originally an insult. f During the Personal Rule Charles I governed with a new Parliament every year.

5. ●● Match the authors or people (1–6) with the works or actions (a–f) and give the date of each. 1 Ben Jonson · 2 John Webster · 3 William Tyndale · 4 John Winthrop · 5 William Harvey · 6 Giovanni Diodati — a *The Duchess of Malfi* · b an Italian Bible printed in Geneva · c the sermon "A Model of Christian Charity" · d *The Alchemist* · e *De motu cordis* · f an English New Testament translated from Greek

6. ●● Complete the timeline with the correct dates. a James I becomes king of England: _____ b Hampton Court Conference: _____ c Jamestown founded: _____ d Authorised Version published: _____ e Jonson's *Works* in folio: _____ f the *Mayflower* crosses the Atlantic: _____ g beginning of the Personal Rule: _____ h Winthrop's fleet reaches Massachusetts: _____

7. ●●● Explain each term in one or two sentences in your own words: a Divine Right of Kings · b predestination · c comedy of humours · d city comedy · e parallelism · f epigram.

8. ●●● Answer in 50–70 words. a Why did some Puritans leave England in the 1620s and 1630s? b Why is the name "Authorised Version" not completely accurate?

Text Analysis

9. ● In T1, "I shall not want" means:

   A. I shall not lack anything.
   B. I shall not desire anything.
   C. I shall not be afraid.
   D. I shall not ask for anything.

10. ●● T1. a Copy the two halves of verse 3. Which words are repeated or parallel? b Find the verse where the speaker begins to address God directly. c Which image of God appears in verse 5? d List three concrete objects in the psalm.

11. ●● T2. a What does Volpone greet first, and what second? b Which words compare gold to a saint or a sacred object? c Explain the comparison in ll. 3–6 (*more glad than is / The teeming earth…*). d Why does Volpone call the gold *son of Sol*?

12. ●● Scansion. Copy T3, l. 1: *Farewell, thou child of my right hand, and joy*. Divide it into syllables, mark the stressed syllables in CAPITALS and the feet with a vertical line. How many feet are there? What is the metre?

13. ●● T3. Paraphrase ll. 5–8 in modern English (two or three sentences).

14. ●●● Compare T1 and T3. Both texts speak of death and of God's will. How are the speakers' feelings different? Answer in 60–80 words, quoting one phrase from each text.

15. ●●● Write a PEE paragraph (80–100 words) on this point: "In T2, Jonson makes Volpone's greed comic by giving it the language of religion."

16. ●●● Classical connection. Read Martial V.34.9–10 and the line from VI.29 in the Connections section. a Which Roman tombstone formula does Martial play on, and how? b Find one idea that T3 shares with Martial's epitaph for Erotion, and one important difference. c Which line of T3 is almost a translation of Martial, and which English word keeps the Latin meaning of *placere*?

Language

17. ● Complete with *a, an, the* or – (no article). a _____ tobacco was _____ first crop that made _____ Virginia rich. b Jonson worked as _____ bricklayer before he became _____ actor. c _____ Puritans believed that _____ Bible was _____ only guide to _____ faith. d _____ life of _____ first settlers was hard. e What _____ beautiful translation! f _____ poor could not afford _____ books.

18. ● Find and correct the mistake in each sentence (✗). a ✗ The freedom is the most important value for me. b ✗ Diodati was professor of Hebrew in the Geneva. c ✗ The Pilgrims crossed Atlantic in 1620. d ✗ The faithfuls went to church every Sunday morning. e ✗ My cousin is engineer in the Netherlands. f ✗ Jonson was in the prison for killing an actor in a duel.

19. ●● Rewrite the words in italics with *the* + adjective. a *People who are rich* could buy books. b *People who had died* in the first winter were buried at night. c Puritans gave money to help *people who were sick*. d Shakespeare wrote for *people who were educated* and for *people who were not*. e *Young people* often prefer modern translations.

20. ●● Complete with *the* or – (no article). a _____ *Mayflower* sailed from _____ Plymouth to _____ Cape Cod. b _____ Netherlands welcomed many refugees, and _____ Leiden was famous for its university. c Jamestown stood on _____ James River in _____ Virginia. d Galileo lived in _____ Italy, Jonson in _____ London. e _____ Bermudas lie in _____ Atlantic, far from _____ United States.

21. ●● Recap (English 3). Rewrite each sentence with a past modal of deduction (*must / might / can't have*). a I'm sure the crossing was terrifying. b Perhaps Jonson saw the Bible translators at court. c It's impossible that the settlers expected such a cold winter. d I'm sure Benjamin's death changed his father.

22. ●● Recap (English 3). Rewrite with a passive reporting structure, starting with the words given. a People say that James I wrote much of his own poetry. → James I… b Many readers believe that Benjamin died on his birthday. → Benjamin… c Historians think that about half the settlers died in the first winter. → It… d People report that Jonson was very proud. → Jonson…

23. ●●● Recap (English 3). Join the sentences with a participle clause (a–b) or a mixed conditional (c–d). a The KJV was printed in 1611. It was read in every church. b The Separatists had lived in Leiden for over ten years. They decided to sail to America. c The *Mayflower* did not reach the Hudson. That is why Plymouth, Massachusetts, is famous today. (If…) d James did not accept the Puritans' demands. That is why many Americans today descend from Puritan emigrants. (If…)

24. ●●● Translate into English. Pay attention to the articles. a La libertà di culto era il sogno dei puritani, ma la vita nella colonia fu durissima. b Jonson, che era stato muratore e soldato, fu sepolto nell'abbazia di Westminster. c Che traduzione straordinaria! La leggiamo in classe due volte alla settimana.

Vocabulary

25. ● Complete with a word from Tabella 1.7 in the correct form. a The minister _____ for two hours every Sunday. b Many Puritans left England to escape religious _____. c A _____ translation follows the original word by word. d The _____ built houses before the winter. e They read _____ at home every evening, especially the Psalms. f Religious _____ was punished by the state.

26. ●● Add *pre-, post-, anti-* or *pro-* to the words in brackets, with a hyphen where necessary. a Many Protestant pamphlets of the time were fiercely (Catholic). b The (Reformation) Church used Latin in its services. c In 1642 London was a (Parliament) city. d Many (war) buildings in London are made of concrete. e A (school) is for very young children. f You should (pone) the meeting until Friday.

27. ●● Match the verbs (1–6) with the nouns (a–f) to make collocations, then use three in sentences of your own. 1 preach · 2 keep · 3 found · 4 sign · 5 escape · 6 make — a a colony · b a compact · c a sermon · d persecution · e a translation · f your faith

Writing and Speaking

28. ●●● Essay with given notes (200–250 words). "Should people be free to leave their country for religious or political reasons?" Write about: 1. the right to freedom of belief; 2. the effects on the country they leave; 3. your own idea. Use the checklist in the Writing section.

29. ●●● Speaking (2 minutes). Answer the question “Should a translation be faithful or beautiful?” Agree in part with one opinion and politely disagree with another, using expressions from Tabella 1.9.

Towards B2

30. ●● Multiple-choice cloze. Choose the correct option A, B, C or D for each gap. In 1604 James I (1) … a conference at Hampton Court. The Puritans asked for many reforms, but most of their (2) … were refused. One idea, (3) …, pleased the king: a new translation of the Bible. About fifty scholars worked on it for several years, and when it (4) … in 1611 it quickly became the Bible of the nation. Its phrases are still (5) … in everyday English. — 1 A held B made C did D kept · 2 A requires B demands C orders D needs · 3 A therefore B although C however D despite · 4 A published B was appeared C came out D came up · 5 A used B using C use D to use

31. ●● Open cloze. Write ONE word in each gap. The Pilgrims had lived in Leiden for (1) _____ ten years before they decided to leave. They wanted to keep their faith (2) _____ also their English identity. In September 1620 (3) _____ *Mayflower* left Plymouth with 102 passengers on board. The crossing took more (4) _____ two months, and the ship reached Cape Cod, not (5) _____ Hudson River. Before landing, 41 men signed an agreement (6) _____ is now known as the Mayflower Compact.

32. ●●● Key-word transformation. Complete the second sentence so that it means the same as the first, using the word in capitals. Use two to five words, including the word given. a People say that the KJV is the most quoted book in English. SAID — The KJV _____ the most quoted book in English. b It’s possible that Jonson met the translators. HAVE — Jonson _____ the translators. c The settlers didn’t know how cold the winter would be, so many of them died. KNOWN — If the settlers _____ how cold the winter would be, fewer of them would have died. d Jonson worked as a bricklayer and then became an actor. BEFORE — Jonson worked as a bricklayer _____ an actor.

PER APPROFONDIRE

- [MOR] K. O. Morgan (ed.), *The Oxford History of Britain*: the chapter on the early Stuarts, from James I to the Personal Rule.
- [NOR] S. Greenblatt (ed.), *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, vol. B: the pages on the King James Bible and on Ben Jonson (*Volpone*, the epigrams).
- [SAN] A. Sanders, *The Short Oxford History of English Literature*: the chapter on the early seventeenth century, for Jonson and Jacobean drama.
- [ABR] M. H. Abrams, G. G. Harpham, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*: the entries “comedy”, “epigram” and “epitaph”.
- [SWA] M. Swan, *Practical English Usage*: the entries on articles (general and specific meanings, institutions, geographical names).

Glossario del capitolo

Authorised Version
Versione Autorizzata — the English Bible of 1611, also called the King James Version; "authorised" is a traditional name.

City comedy
commedia cittadina — a comedy set among the citizens, shopkeepers and tricksters of contemporary London.

Comedy of humours
commedia degli umori — a comedy whose characters are each dominated by one passion (Jonson).

Dissent
dissenso — disagreement with the official religion or opinion.

Divine Right of Kings
diritto divino dei re — the belief that a king's power comes from God and that subjects may never resist him.

Epigram
epigramma — a short, polished poem ending with a witty or memorable point.

Epitaph
epitaffio — a short text or poem written for a tombstone, or as if for one.

Great Migration
Grande Migrazione — the emigration of about 20,000 English Puritans to New England in the 1630s.

Hampton Court Conference
conferenza di Hampton Court — the meeting of 1604 where James I heard Puritan demands and agreed to a new Bible translation.

Legacy-hunter
cacciatore di eredità (latino *captator*) — someone who flatters a rich, childless person in the hope of being named in his or her will.

Mayflower Compact
patto del Mayflower — the agreement signed on 11 November 1620 (Old Style) by which the settlers formed a "civil body politic".

Parallelism
parallelismo — the repetition of the same structure in two parts of a sentence or verse, typical of Hebrew poetry.

Personal Rule
governo personale — the years 1629–1640, when Charles I governed without Parliament.

Pilgrim Fathers
Padri Pellegrini — the later name for the settlers who crossed on the *Mayflower* in 1620 and founded Plymouth Colony.

Predestination
predestinazione — the Calvinist belief that God has decided in advance who will be saved.

Puritans
puritani — English Protestants who wanted to "purify" the Church of everything not found in the Bible.

Separatists
separatisti — Puritans who left the Church of England to form independent congregations.

Settler
colono — a person who goes to live in a new country or region.

Tribe of Ben
la "tribù di Ben" — the younger poets who saw Ben Jonson as their master.

Soluzioni

1. B.

2. C (1607; Roanoke had failed, Plymouth Colony was founded in 1620 and Boston in 1630).

3. D.

4. a F — Coverdale's Bible (1535) was the first complete printed English Bible, and the Wycliffite Bible existed in manuscript. b T. c F — it reached Cape Cod, in New England, outside the Virginia Company's territory. d T (11 November 1620, Old Style). e T. f F — he governed without Parliament from 1629 to 1640.

5. 1 d, 1610 · 2 a, c. 1613 · 3 f, 1526 · 4 c, 1630 (traditional date) · 5 e, 1628 · 6 b, 1607 (revised 1641).

6. a 1603 · b 1604 (January) · c 1607 · d 1611 · e 1616 · f 1620 · g 1629 · h 1630.

7. Model answers. a The belief that a king receives his power from God, answers only to God and may never be resisted by his subjects. b The Calvinist belief that God has decided before the creation who will be saved. c A comedy whose characters are each dominated by one passion or obsession (a "humour"), which the playwright exaggerates and satirises. d A comedy set in contemporary London among ordinary citizens, shopkeepers and tricksters. e A figure in which the second part of a verse or sentence repeats, completes or contrasts with the first, typical of Hebrew poetry. f A short, polished poem that ends with a witty or memorable point.

8. Traccia. a Under James I and above all under Charles I and Archbishop Laud, Puritans were pressed to accept ceremonies they thought Catholic, and those who protested could be fined or imprisoned. Some, like the Separatists, had already left the Church of England. America offered the chance to build a community where they could worship as they believed, keep their English identity and set an example to the world ("a city upon a hill"). b The KJV's title page says it was "appointed to be read in Churches", and it was produced under the king's patronage, but no record of a formal act of authorisation by king, Parliament or Church has survived. The name is traditional: it describes how the version was used rather than a known legal decision.

9. A.

10. a *He restoreth my soul / he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake*: the same subject *he*, a verb in *-eth* and the object *me / my* are repeated; the second half adds where God leads him and why. b Verse 4 (*for thou art with me*). c God as a generous host who prepares a table, anoints his guest and fills his cup. d Any three: pastures, waters, rod, staff, table, head, oil, cup, house.

11. a First the day, then his gold. b *shrine, Saint, adoration, relick, sacred, blessed*. c Volpone is happier to see his gold than the fertile earth is to see the sun return in spring, when it stands in the constellation of the Ram: his gold is a greater source of life and joy for him than the sun is for the earth. d Because gold was associated with the sun (Sol) in alchemy, and Volpone says his gold is even brighter than its "father".

12. fare-WELL | thou CHILD | of MY | right HAND, | and JOY — ten syllables, five feet, each an unstressed + stressed syllable: iambic pentameter. (Some readers stress *right* as well as *hand*; the line is still read as five iambs.)

13. Model answer: If only I could stop feeling like a father now! Why should anyone mourn a condition that he ought to envy? My son has escaped so early the violence of the world and of the body, and, even if he had suffered nothing else, he has escaped old age.

14. Traccia: the speaker of T1 meets death ("the valley of the shadow of death") with calm trust: God is with him, so he "will fear no evil". The father in T3

also accepts God's will in theory — the child was "lent" and has escaped "world's, and flesh's rage" — but his grief breaks through ("Oh! could I lose all father, now!"), and he ends by deciding never to love too much. T1 expresses confident faith; T3 a struggle between faith and feeling.

15. Model: Point — Jonson makes Volpone's greed comic by describing gold as if it were God. Evidence — Volpone asks Mosca to "Open the shrine, that I may see my Saint", then wants to kiss the gold "With adoration" as a "relick / Of sacred treasure". Explanation — the words of worship are absurdly misplaced: a saint and a relic belong to a church, not to a pile of coins. The audience laughs at the exaggeration, but the joke also judges him: his religion is greed, and the whole play will show where it leads.

16. a *Sit tibi terra levis*, "may the earth be light on you": Martial turns the wish into an argument — the earth must not be heavy on Erotion, because she, so small, was never heavy on it. b Shared (any one): a child's death; the exact count of the years (six, seven); a wish for gentle rest (*Rest in soft peace* / the soft bones under light earth); a witty final point. Difference (any one): Martial sends the girl to a pagan underworld and entrusts her to his dead parents, while Jonson speaks as a Christian father whose son was a "loan" returned to God; Jonson blames himself (*My sin was too much hope of thee*), Martial does not. c The last line, *As what he loves may never like too much* (*Quidquid ames, cupias non placuisse nimis*); *like* = "please".

17. a – / the / – · b a / an · c – (also: The) / the / the / – · d The / the · e a · f The / –.

18. a Freedom is the most important value for me. · b …professor of Hebrew in Geneva (or: a professor of Hebrew) · c …crossed the Atlantic… · d The faithful went to church… · e …is an engineer… · f Jonson was in prison…

19. a The rich · b The dead · c the sick · d the educated / the uneducated · e The young.

20. a The / – / – · b The / – · c the / – · d – / – · e The / the / the.

21. a The crossing must have been terrifying. b Jonson might (may) have seen the Bible translators at court. c The settlers can't have expected such a cold winter. d Benjamin's death must have changed his father.

22. a James I is said to have written much of his own poetry. b Benjamin is believed (by many readers) to have died on his birthday. c It is thought (by historians) that about half the settlers died in the first winter. d Jonson is reported to have been very proud.

23. a Printed in 1611, the KJV was read in every church. b Having lived in Leiden for over ten years, the Separatists decided to sail to America. c If the *Mayflower* had reached the Hudson, Plymouth, Massachusetts, would not be famous today. d If James had accepted the Puritans' demands, fewer Americans would descend from Puritan emigrants today.

24. a Freedom of worship was the Puritans' dream, but life in the colony was very hard. b Jonson, who had been a bricklayer and a soldier, was buried in Westminster Abbey. c What an extraordinary translation! We read it in class twice a week.

25. a preached (also: preaches) · b persecution · c literal · d settlers · e scripture · f dissent.

26. a anti-Catholic · b pre-Reformation · c pro-Parliament · d post-war · e preschool (also pre-school) · f postpone.

27. 1 c · 2 f · 3 a · 4 b · 5 d · 6 e. Sentences: open; check the collocation and the article (e.g. *The Pilgrims signed a compact before they landed.*).

28. Marking guide: both notes discussed and a clearly different third point (e.g. the countries that receive the emigrants; the risks of the journey; whether leaving is better than staying to change one's country); clear thesis and conclusion; four or five paragraphs with topic sentences; formal linkers; correct articles with abstract nouns (*freedom of belief, persecution*); 200–250 words.

29. Model answer: "I agree up to a point with people who say a translation must be faithful: readers want to know what the author really wrote. But I'm not entirely convinced that a literal translation is

the most faithful one. The King James translators changed words to make the sentences sound natural, and that's why their Psalm 23 still moves people today. So I'd say a good translation is faithful to the meaning and the tone, and free with the words."

30. 1 A · 2 B · 3 C · 4 C · 5 A.

31. 1 about (also: some, over) · 2 and · 3 the · 4 than · 5 the · 6 which (also: that).

32. a is said to be · b may / might have met (also: could have met) · c had known · d before becoming (also: before he became).