## UNWRAP THE STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS

***Text:*** *Genesis 1-3*

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| **Standard :**  Standard 3:  Students will appreciate the TaNaKH as a multi-vocal text with a complex history of development.  **Benchmarks:**  **3.10** Recognizes that there are various methodologies for biblical text study | | |
| **Students will know** | **Students will be able to do** | **Text** |
| Various methods of biblical interpretation | Distinguishes source critical, historical critical, literary critical, rabbinic p’shat, rabbinic d’rash and feminist approaches to the biblical text.  Identifies key names and schools of thought  Able to ‘Think’ in prism of different commentaries or methods | Several key textual cruxes for the different methodologies: Rashi on 1:1, 1:4, 1:8, 1:9, 1:14, 1:22, 1:26, 2:4, 2:7, 2:21, 2:23, 3:9.  Historical-critical commentaries on 1:1, 1:2, 1:6-7, 1:26, 2:4, 2:16-17, 3:8-9  Feminist commentaries on 1:26-7, 2:18, 3:12-13  Literary commentaries on ch 1 structure, ch 2 characterization  Ancient Near Eastern parallel creation stories.  **NB: list to be edited by particular teacher** |
| Premises of the methods | Describes the status of the biblical text in each method  Explicates text using different methods  Relates methods to Jewish identity  Makes a case for different methods in particular situations and in general | Ed Greenstein, The Bible as She is Read  Israel Knohl, The Divine Symphony, ch 1  Marc Zvi Brettler, How to Read the Torah  Elliot Dorff, Conservative Judaism: Our ancestors to our descendants |
| History of development of methods | Describes history of the development of each method | John Barton, Reading the Old Testament |
| Methods of various commentaries | Identifies methods of different commentaries | [Begin this work as build up to formative narrative in study of chs 2-3] |
| Complex history of the text | Describes how methods relate to the ‘complex history’ questions | Elliot Dorff, Medieval and Modern Theories of Revelation (back of Etz Hayim chumash) |

**DETERMINE BIG IDEAS AND ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS**

BIG IDEAS: (Identify the important generalizations—what you want students to deeply understand and apply. Brainstorm several, and narrow to a few that align best with the chosen content material)

\* You can read the Bible in different ways.

\* Modern interpretation of the Bible can be utterly different from medieval interpretation.

\* There are different ideological views of how to read the Bible.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: (Open-ended questions to focus students’ thinking and encourage students to engage with Big Ideas.)

\* What difference does it make which way you read the Bible?

\* Why have rabbinic and modern Bible readers read the Bible so differently?

\* How do we choose which methodology to use at any given time?

\* How do we derive religious meaning from modern critical readings of the Bible?

**CREATE THE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT WITH ENGAGING SCENARIO**

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT (Performance Assessment includes a spectrum of tasks designed for students to synthesize and consolidate what they learned. Students demonstrate “proficiency” in the skills, knowledge and big ideas of the unit.)

**Task 1:** *Identifying three different commentaries in an unseen text*

Identify the style of the commentaries and explain your reasoning. *(e.g. Is it rabbinic drash, feminist, literary criticism, medieval?)*

**מתמחה Mastery**

* Identifies style of each of the three commentaries
* For each commentary, provides one accurate reason.

**TASK 2:** *Creating a “Torat Hayyim” page, writing commentaries in the style of “learned commentaries”*

Thinking about the various approaches to biblical interpretation which we have encountered to date in this class, formulate four commentaries on the text in the style of different methods.

**מתמחה Mastery**

* Commentary includes two points that are identifiable as pertaining to the method specified, e.g.: on Genesis 2:5, in the style of source criticism: “Because different words are used for the name of God, scholars argue that this text comes from a different source from chapter one”.
* Methods chosen are appropriate to text (i.e. student does not choose source criticism when the text is from one source)
* Commentaries make sense and are reasonable interpretations of the text
* Commentaries are 3-4 sentences per text and contain no spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors

**TASK 3:** *Marriage Guidance Counseling for Ms. Rashi and Mr. Sarna*

ENGAGING SCENARIO (Creates motivation or sets the scene for students to apply knowledge and skills to problem solving.)

Ms. Rashi and Mr. Sarna have a troubled relationship. They were initially attracted to each other because of their shared love of the Bible in general and the Torah in particular. Mr. Sarna wooed the then Ms. Rashi with lyrics from *Shir HaShirim*, and after a whirlwind romance they got married. However, their first year of marriage has been tough. Even though the Torah is really important to them both, they can’t seem to stop fighting over it. Now they can barely read a single verse together without coming to loggerheads. They have finally agreed to seek professional help from Jewish Publication Society’s Marriage Counselors, Inc.

Develop a dialogue (or actually “trialogue”) between three characters: Ms. Rashi, Mr. Sarna, and Dr. Fishbane, JPS’s marriage counselor. Dr. Fishbane’s job will be to try to persuade Ms. Rashi and Mr. Sarna that they can find a compromise and forge a new way of living together so that they can both be happy. Naturally, this is easier said than done.

You should make sure that through your writing, each character:

\* Clearly explains the philosophical and religious positions that he/she holds.

\* Uses examples from Biblical texts to clarify or explain these positions.

\* Backs up his/her positions with others who believe similarly or with relevant scholarly or religious research.

\* Gives emotional, religious, and/or spiritual reasons why the other positions are disturbing.

\* Relates the study of Bible to other aspects of his/her identity as a Jew and a human being.

You may (and should) use humor or any other creative input you can come up with, but these creative inputs must not come at the expense of the above requirements.

**מתמחה Mastery**

* Clearly explains the philosophical and religious positions that each character holds.
* For each character, uses examples from two Biblical texts to clarify or explain the positions held.
* Biblical texts are cited accurately in correct English translation.
* For each character, cites one other scholar or thinker who follows the same position.
* For each character, includes one emotional, religious, or spiritual reason why the other positions are disturbing.
* For each character, gives one way in which the study of Bible relates to other aspects of his/her identity as a Jew and a human being.
* Writing contains fewer than three grammatical or mechanical errors.
* Dialogue writing is clear and well-structured, with varied sentence structure, length and style.