

The Prophet Samuel:

Tip: Use all 3 translations (NABRE, CEV and NRSVCE to check for appropriate language before providing copies to learners. The version below is a mixture of all 3 translations. You may choose to use only the CEV, but where the language is suitable for year 6 learners across all 3 translations the differences between translations can assist learners to discover meaning in the text.)

Building key literacy skills:

Reading and comprehending, synthesising, inferring meaning, predicting, questioning.

Task: Use the information and clues in the text to create a new, summarised version of the story. Learners work as a whole class or in small groups with a printout of the text, highlighters and pens. Break up the story into sections that can be easily summarised. Highlight key words to ensure the important points are captured. Cut out each section and write a summary underneath. The following shows one way this text could be broken up with the summary recorded in blue text.

Example: Text 1

The context for the story of Samuel; Hannah prays for a son and promises to offer him to God – 1 Samuel 1:1-28

Chapter 1

- 1. Elkanah and His Family at Shiloh.** ¹There was a certain man from Ramathaim, a Zuphite from the hill country of Ephraim. His name was Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. ²He had two wives, one named Hannah, the other Peninnah; Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.
(Summary: A man named Elkanah lived in the hill country with two wives – one called Peninnah who had children and one called Hannah who had no children.)
- ³ Each year this man went up from his city to worship and offer sacrifice to the LORD of hosts at Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were ministering as priests of the LORD.
(Summary: Every year Elkanah went to the temple in Shiloh, where his sons Hophni and Phinehas worked as priests.)
- ⁴When the day came for Elkanah to offer sacrifice, he used to give portions to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters, ⁵but he would give a double portion to Hannah because he loved her, though the LORD had closed her womb. ⁶Her rival,^[a] to upset her, would torment her constantly, since the LORD had closed her womb. Year after year, when she went up to the house of the LORD, Peninnah would provoke her, and Hannah would weep and refuse to eat.^[b] ⁸Elkanah, her husband, would say to her: "Hannah, why are you weeping? Why are you not eating? Why are you so miserable? Am I not better for you than ten sons?"
(Summary: Elkanah gave double portions of his sacrifice to Hannah because she was upset that she had no children. Peninnah used to tease Hannah about not having children and this upset Hannah terribly.)

Pre teach that it was normal to have two wives in this time and place.

Pre teach that in this time people thought it was punishment from God if someone could not have children.

Predict the qualities of Eli's sons (E.g holy, responsible...)

4. **Hannah's Prayer.** ⁹ Hannah rose after one such meal at Shiloh, and presented herself before the LORD; at the time Eli the priest was sitting on a chair near the doorpost of the LORD's temple. ¹⁰ In her bitterness she prayed to the LORD, weeping freely, ¹¹ and made this vow: "O LORD of hosts, if you look with pity on the hardship of your servant, if you remember me and do not forget me, if you give your handmaid a male child, I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life. No razor shall ever touch his head."^[c]

(Summary: Hannah went to the temple at Shiloh and prayed that God would grant her a child. She even promised that she would give the child back to God for the rest of his life.)

5. ¹² As she continued praying before the LORD, Eli observed her mouth. ¹³ Hannah was praying silently; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard; therefore Eli thought she was drunk. ¹⁴ So Eli said to her, "How long will you make a drunken spectacle of yourself? Put away your wine." ¹⁵ But Hannah answered, "No, my lord, I am a woman deeply troubled; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the LORD. ¹⁶ Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation all this time." ¹⁷ Then Eli answered, "Go in peace; the God of Israel grant the petition you have made to him." ¹⁸ And she said, "Let your servant find favor in your sight."

(Summary: Eli thought that Hannah was drunk. But Hannah told him she was deeply worried so she was praying her genuine prayer to God, with all her heart. Then Eli realised he had made a mistake, so he told Hannah to go in peace and prayed that God would grant Hannah her prayer.)

6. Then the woman went to her quarters,[f] ate and drank with her husband,[g] and her countenance was sad no longer.[h]
¹⁹ They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the Lord; then they went back to their house at Ramah. Elkanah knew his wife Hannah, and the Lord remembered her. ²⁰ In due time Hannah conceived and bore a son. She named him Samuel, for she said, "I have asked him of the Lord."

(Summary: Hannah had a baby boy that she named Samuel.)

7. The next time her husband Elkanah was going up with the rest of his household to offer the customary sacrifice to the LORD and to fulfill his vows, ²² Hannah did not go, explaining to her husband, "Once the child is weaned, I will take him to appear before the LORD and leave him there forever."^[e] ²³ Her husband Elkanah answered her: "Do what you think best; wait until you have weaned him. Only may the LORD fulfill his word!" And so she remained at home and nursed her son until she had weaned him.

(Summary: After Samuel was born, Hannah did not go with Elkanah to the temple in Shiloh. Instead, she stayed at home to look after Samuel.)

What
questions do
have about
the text?

8. Hannah Presents Samuel to the Lord. ²⁴ Once he was weaned, she brought him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah^[1] of flour, and a skin of wine, and presented him at the house of the LORD in Shiloh. ²⁵ After they had slaughtered the bull, they brought the child to Eli. ²⁶ Then Hannah spoke up: "Excuse me, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who stood here near you, praying to the LORD. ²⁷ I prayed for this child, and the LORD granted my request. ²⁸ Now I, in turn, give him to the LORD; as long as he lives, he shall be dedicated to the LORD." Then they worshiped there before the LORD.

(Summary: When Samuel was a few years old she brought Samuel to the temple in Shiloh, along with an animal, wine and flour. Hannah gave Samuel to Eli and told him that she was keeping her promise to give Samuel to God.)

Divide the class into groups:

- 10 minute story mapping – each group takes one of the summary statements and adds illustrations / conversation or thought bubbles to highlight the story or key insights. Display all parts of the story in order.
- After each story consider: What does this text tell us about the context of the time? At the end of all the texts about the prophet consider: What can we learn about the message of the prophet? (What did this prophet try to do and why?)

Continue the same process with the following texts:

- Hannah's prayer of thanksgiving for Samuel – [1 Samuel 2:1-10](#)
- The corruption of Hophni and Phinehas – [1 Samuel 2:11-17](#)
- The call of Samuel – [1 Samuel 2:1-4:1a](#)
- Samuel's work as Judge – [1 Samuel 7: 3 – 6, 15-17](#)
- Samuel anoints David as King – [1 Samuel 16:1-13](#)

Through each reading of the text look for opportunities for:

Comprehending (What do I notice? What clues can I find that help me discover the author's meaning?)

Synthesising (How could I summarise this story into 2 or 3 sentences?)

Inferring meaning (What might the author be implying? What does the author want readers to understand about God or about the prophet?)

Predicting (What do you think will happen next? Why? What do you think this character is going to say or do? Why?)

Questioning (Is anyone's voice missing in this story? Why might the author have included this information? Why are people still reading this story today?)

When all the texts have been investigated draw up a chart to identify the context of the prophet, the message of the prophet and why the prophet gave this message:

The context of Samuel	Samuel's message	Why did Samuel say and do what he did?
Samuel's mother believed he was a gift from God and she dedicated his life to God by taking him to Eli, at the temple of Shiloh. (The name 'Samuel' even means 'God has heard'.) However, corruption was rife. Eli's sons were corrupt and misused their power. The people in the temple were not listening to God. Eli didn't do anything about complaints against his son. In this context, God called Samuel, but Samuel did not recognise the voice of God. Eventually, Eli realised and helped Samuel to listen and respond to God. Samuel then grew up to be a wise leader who became the last judge before Israel is led by Kings.	Samuel was a just leader and he taught people about the importance of listening to God and living in ways that reflected how God wanted them to live (and not just do what they liked). Samuel also taught that good leaders need to be people of justice, honesty and integrity.	<p>As a prophet, Samuel listens to God and acts on what he believes God asks him to do. Samuel saw the corruption of leaders in his time and he became a new leader, who stopped corruption (the misuse of power).</p> <p>Year 6 connection to life:</p> <p>What if no one was listening to God about a certain issue today?</p> <p>What if God called you to listen and be a prophet in the world today?</p> <p>What issues do you think that God could call a young person today to speak out about? (E.g. the environment, dignity and the issue of homelessness...)</p>

Some helpful information for teachers:

[Samuel, the Prophet: 12 Intriguing Facts about His Life and Legacy \(overviewbible.com\)](https://www.overviewbible.com/samuel-the-prophet/)

[The Call of Samuel - Word on Fire](#) (Excellent information to understand the context of the story)