

Can we trust the Bible? (Grades 3-5)

As Christians sometimes we can have doubts about our faith. Some of these doubts can be very troubling, so we like to call them “Doubt Monsters”. During this lesson, we are going to provide you with a tool to increase your confidence in the Bible and strengthen your faith. Let’s get started!

Since the Bible was written long ago and has been copied many times, critics have said that it must be filled with mistakes by now. Is that true? Let’s take a look at our helpful tool—MAP. Each letter of MAP stands for something:

M = Manuscripts

A

P

The word “manuscript” simply means writings or book. Since the Bible was written long before computers were invented, it was written on scrolls made of parchment (paper) and animal skins. Over time, these materials would fall apart. Because of this, a special group of people called scribes would copy the words of the original scrolls onto new scrolls. The scribes were very careful when copying the scrolls! Once they were done, they would carefully check the new scroll to ensure that it was perfect. If they found even one mistake, they would destroy the scroll and start all over again...and you thought your teacher was tough! So, did it work? Let’s talk about the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The Bible was written thousands of years ago and has been translated over and over again – it must be filled with mistakes by now. It can’t be trusted!

Doubt monster!



In 1947, some shepherds looking for their lost sheep near the Dead Sea found some caves. They wondered if their sheep had wandered into a cave. Since they knew that wild animals sometimes live in caves, one of the shepherds threw a rock into the cave to make sure it was safe to go in. Instead of a roar, they heard a loud crash!



The Dead Sea Scrolls were found in caves stored in jars like the one shown above.

When the shepherds went into the cave, they found one of the most significant archaeological discoveries of our time—the Dead Sea Scrolls. The scrolls were found in clay jars and included fragments of almost every book in the Old Testament. They even found a complete copy of the book of Isaiah! When experts compared the book of Isaiah that we have in our Bibles today to the Dead Sea scroll, it turned out to be 95% the same! God has done a great job preserving His holy Word!

Activity: in the space shown below, copy the scripture shown in the box and then answer the questions. Important note: please make sure your copy has the same number of words on each line.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.”

Genesis 1:1-2

After you have copied the text, complete the following tests:

	<u>original</u>	<u>copy</u>
1. Count the number of letters on each line:	_____	_____
Line #1:	_____	_____
Line #2:	_____	_____
Line #3:	_____	_____
Line #4:	_____	_____
Line #5:	_____	_____
2. Add up the total number of letters :	_____	_____
3. Count each “h” in both the original and your copy:	_____	_____
4. Count each “n” in both the original and your copy:	_____	_____
5. Count each “t” in both the original and your copy:	_____	_____

Are all of the numbers the same for the original and the copy? If so, congratulations! If not, please don't feel bad—copying things accurately requires lots of practice.

Ok, let's move on to the next objection: some people say that the Bible is riddled with myths and mistakes. They claim there is no evidence that some of the cities and people mentioned in the Bible ever existed! Let's look at our MAP:

M = Manuscripts

A = Archaeology

P

The “A” in MAP stands for archaeology. Archaeology is the study of history through ancient ruins and artifacts. Over the years, archaeologists have

Of course the Bible is not accurate—it's riddled with myths, mistakes and contradictions. It has nothing to do with historical fact!



discovered several things that provide evidence that the Bible can be trusted. After watching the video, complete the activity below.

Activity: draw a line between the description and the picture of the discovery.

Discovery that proved King Sargon of Assyria was a real person



Discovery that proved the High Priest Caiaphas really existed



Discovery that proved the Hittite nation was not a myth



This discovery proved that Roman governor Pontius Pilate existed



Ok, it's time for the final objection. Some people think that the Bible is just a book that contains lots of stories. How do we know that the Bible is really the Word of God? Glad you asked! Let's look at our MAP again:

M = Manuscripts

A = Archaeology

P = Prophecy

The Bible is filled with fairytales – why should we believe it?



The “P” in MAP stands for prophecy. Prophecies are predictions about the future and the Bible contains hundreds of them! Many prophecies are about Jesus Christ and have already come true. Here are a few examples:

Prediction: “Jesus would be born in the town of Bethlehem.” Micah 5:2

Fulfilment: Matthew 1:1, Luke 3:23,31

Prediction: “Descendant from the House of David.” Jeremiah 23:5

Fulfilment: Matthew 1:1, Luke 3:23,31

Prediction: “Jesus would heal people who are blind and deaf.” Isaiah 35:5-6

Fulfilment: Matthew 9:35

Prediction: “Jesus would ride into Jerusalem on a donkey.” Zechariah. 9:9

Fulfilment: Luke 19:35-37

Prediction: “He would be buried in a rich man's tomb.” Isaiah 53:9

Fulfilment: Matt. 27:57-60

Prediction: “Jesus would be raised from the dead.” Psalm 16:10, 30:3

Fulfilment: Acts 2:31, 13:33-35

As you can see, Jesus has already fulfilled many prophecies and will fulfil the remaining ones when He comes back some day. What is the probability of just eight prophecies coming true in one person?

1 chance in 10^{28} or 10,000,000,000,000, 000,000,000,000,000!

In other words, it is impossible—but not for God! Since God exists outside of space and time, He sees everything all at once. How do we know that the Bible is God’s Word? Hundreds of fulfilled prophecies prove it!

We believe God told the prophets to write down predictions about the future because:

1. He wanted to show us that the Bible is His Word.
2. He wanted us not to overlook the most amazing event of all time: the arrival of Jesus Christ.

Activity: look up the scriptures above.

The next time you have doubts, remember MAP

M = Manuscripts: The Dead Sea Scrolls and other discoveries prove that what we have in our Bibles is essentially the same that was written thousands of years ago. God has done a great job preserving His Word.

A = Archaeology: Archaeological discoveries have confirmed many historical details found in the Bible. No one has ever discovered anything that disproves the Bible!

P = Prophecy: hundreds of fulfilled prophecies prove that the Bible is the Word of God.

We can trust the Bible!

Activity: Doubt Monster targets

1. Print the Doubt Monster targets on the next three pages. Cardstock works the best, but regular paper will work.
2. Fold the pages along the lines.
3. Set up the Doubt Monster targets.
4. Use paper balls, rubber bands or dart guns to knock down the targets.

(1) Please fold along this line first

(2) Please fold along this line

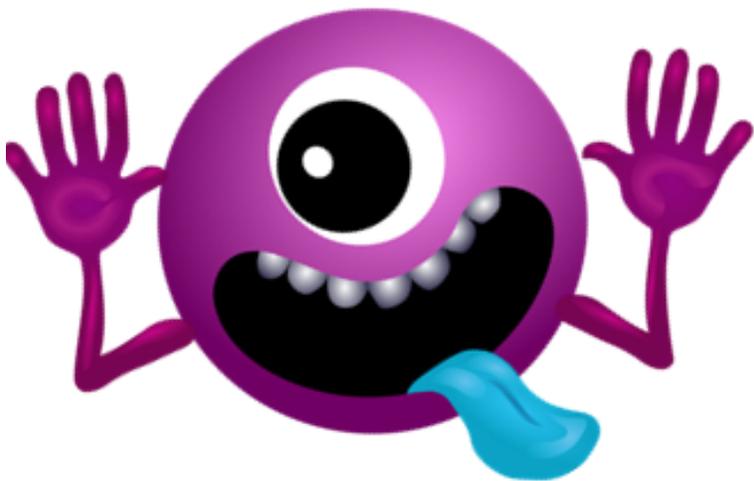
Doubt Monster



(1) Please fold along this line first

(2) Please fold along this line

Doubt Monster



(1) Please fold along this line first

(2) Please fold along this line

Doubt Monster

