

We emphasize four elemental meanings for the copula as being the most significant and those most likely to make a substantial contribution to your understanding.

1. Simple Narrative

In this case the copula is a general connective linking common words and/or thoughts in simple narrative manner. The translation "and" is probably the best rendering for this use.

Deuteronomy 1:1

בֵּין פָּרָן וּבֵין תּוֹפֵל

"between Paran and Tophel"

Deuteronomy 1:13

אֲנָשִׁים חֲכָמִים וְנֹבְנִים

"men wise and understanding"

2. Continuous Action

This defines a state in which one thing is predicated by another... the better translation still being "and". An example is in

Deuteronomy 1:7

פְּנוּ וְהִסַּעוּ

"turn and go"

The going is dependent on the turning and together they define one continuing action.

3. Resultant Action

The definition takes in a situation where the second clause shows the result of the first. The second is thereby dependent on the first for meaning and place in the sentence. Translation is best made with "so", "yet", "then", "that", etc., with context being an important help in your decision.

Deuteronomy 1:9

וַיִּסְמַח וַיִּשְׁמַע וַיִּשְׁמַע

"so spoke unto them at that time..."

4. Antithetical Action

This notes a situation where the second clause moves against the first clause or takes an action contrary to the first. The better translation rendering is "but" or "since"

Deuteronomy 1:7

וְכֹל הַבְּהֵמָה וְשֵׁלֶף

"but the cattle and the spoil..."

A good bit of this, naturally, is in the interpretative skill of the worker. Just keep it in mind and try to look at the ways when you translate.