



Q. *Could not father have dictated the Book of Mormon to you, Oliver Cowdery and the others who wrote for him, after having first written it, or having first read it out of some book?*

A. Joseph Smith could neither write nor dictate a coherent and well-worded letter; let alone dictating a book like the Book of Mormon. And, though I was an active participant in the scenes that transpired, . . . it is marvelous to me, “a marvel and a wonder,” as much so as to any one else.

— *Emma Smith, 1879*

## Emma Smith on the Book of Mormon Translation Process, Quote 2

**Explanation** Answering a question posed by her son Joseph Smith III in 1879, Emma Smith indicated that the Prophet Joseph Smith could not have been the author of the Book of Mormon, for he had neither the writing abilities nor adequate knowledge of ancient Israel. In fact, so limited was Joseph's knowledge when he translated the plates that he feared he had found an error when he read from the plates of Nephi that the city of Jerusalem was surrounded by a wall.

**Sources** Joseph Smith III, "Last Testimony of Sister Emma," *Saints' Advocate* 2 (Oct. 1879): 51; Edmund C. Briggs, "Interview with David Whitmer," *Saints' Herald* 31 (21 June 1884): 396–97. For additional sources and related discussion, see John W. Welch and Tim Rathbone, "The Translation of the Book of Mormon: Basic Historical Information" (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1986), 8–9, 15.