In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. I Bear Witness that There is No God but Allah and I Bear Witness that Muhammad is His Messenger.

A Resource Guide For Homeschoolers

A Mother's Lap is a Child's First School

Saviours' Day 2010

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What is the Objective of Homeschooling?

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

MESSANGER MUHAMMAD'S OBJECTIVES FOR OUR CHILDREN

1. ATTITUDES TO BE DEVELOPED IN MUSLIM CHILDREN:

Open mindedness

Concern for others

Cooperation

Courtesy

Respect for individuals and property

Integrity

Tolerance

Honesty

Civic responsibility

Communication

Self-worth, Self-development

Love of learning

Concern for general welfare

Consent to be governed

Freedom from iniquity

2. SKILLS TO DEVELOP IN MUSLIM CHILDREN:

Skill at problem solving

Self-evaluation and group evaluation

Critical thinking

Communication skill (listening, talking, writing)

Map and chart skills

Study skills: The ability to do research

The ability to outline

The ability to use original sources

The ability to summarize

The ability to record dates

The ability to take notes

The ability to select main ideas

The ability to read for details

The ability to make oral and written reports

The ability to plan

The ability to read and use charts, maps, graphs, and political cartoons

3. VALUES TO BE DEVELOPED IN MUSLIM CHILDREN:

Value of Islamic principles

Islamic moral values

Aesthetic values

Spiritual values

Political, social and economic values

4. KNOWLEDGE TO BE DEVELOPED IN MUSLIM CHILDREN:

Islam

Islam culture—heritage

Black American culture-history and heritage

Other cultures

World problems

Recognition of other members of the Black Nation

Family life

Other family lives

5. ABILITIES TO BE DEVELOPED:

Creativity

Self-control

To work as a unit

To communicate effectively with others

Critical thinking

Creative thinking

To make decisions justly and righteously

To pass judgment justly and righteously

To apply knowledge and learning justly and righteously

Sharing each other's viewpoint based on Islamic values

Ability to plan

Ability to organize

6. APPRECIATIONS TO BE DEVELOPED:

Appreciation of the fine things in the Islamic life

Appreciation of the Muslim environment

Respect for honest work

Enjoyment of a rich, full life

Islamic enjoyment of the Arts, Sciences, Humanities, and Fine Arts

Islamic enjoyment of educational opportunities

7. CHARACTERISTICS TO BE DEVELOPED:

Self-direction

Self-realization

Self-identification

Resourcefulness

Initiative

Cooperation with Unit

Open mindedness

Effective evaluation processes

8. TRAITS TO BE DEVELOPED:

Insight

Understanding

Responsibility

Honesty

Sincerity

Sense of humor

Submitted by Dawn Muhammad

Homeschooling, A Closer Look

The Ten Most Important Things You Need to Know About Homeschooling

When parents first consider homeschooling their children, there is so much for them to contemplate and learn that it can be very overwhelming. Before deciding to move forward with homeschooling, parents will read many articles about the how's and why's; they will learn about different homeschooling approaches, available curriculum, how to set up a homeschooling space, and companies that can help parents create a successful homeschooling year for their children. Homeschool.com has put together a list of the 10 most important things parents need to know about homeschooling to help you in your homeschooling endeavors, or to pass-along to new homeschoolers.

1. Homeschooling is life changing. It creates personal growth for both the parent and the child. You get a chance to re-discover your own special genius, while helping your children to find theirs. Nothing you will ever do will have a more profound effect on your children and your family's future than homeschooling.

2. You are qualified to homeschool your children if you love to read to them, love to spend time with them, love to explore the world with them, love to see them learn new things and, most importantly, love them. Again, don't doubt your ability!

3. Children love to learn. They have an innate desire to explore the world and examine what they find interesting. Children learn by following their interests, with one interest leading to another. Homeschooling families learn together, making learning a life-long process.

4. Homeschooling is legal everywhere in the United States, but homeschooling laws vary from state to state. The three basic categories for homeschooling laws are: home education laws, private school laws, and equivalency laws. The best way to learn about your state's laws is to contact a local support group in your area. To locate a representative from your state, please visit our list of local homeschooling groups by visiting www.Homeschool.com. Homeschool group leaders are well versed in your state's particular laws and regulations and can be a great resource for you.

5. It does not take six to eight hours per day to homeschool your child. A significant amount of time at school is spent waiting. Design a plan that works for your family and be prepared to revise it several times or even start over. Don't sacrifice your family's happiness to "school" your children. There are many different ways that families can homeschool - find what works for you and your family. Think outside of the box, and where necessary, consult with homeschooling/learning specialists.

6. Your child will not become a social misfit. Children do not need to be socialized in a large group of same-age children to become well adjusted socially; it is quite the opposite. Most parents want their children to learn their social graces from adults, not other children. Homeschoolers have healthy relationships with people of all ages,

including the new mother next door, the retired couple who loves to garden, their friends at ballet, 4-H and Karate and, most importantly, their parents.

7. Don't be afraid to teach Algebra or high-level math courses! When your child is ready for these courses, there are numerous options to assist you if your knowledge is not up-to-speed. Explore the many resources available to help your child learn high-level math skills: in a community college class, with a tutor, through a textbook, or with a computer program.

8. You will question yourself a lot, maybe even several times a day in the beginning. This is normal. Find a fellow homeschooling friend for support. Remind each other that it's okay to feel that your children didn't seem to learn anything on a given day. They did, and so did you! Even professional teachers question themselves sometimes!

9. Thousands of homeschooling families are able to make the money they need, while also homeschooling their children. Whether you create a family business or dream job, or restructure your current job, your children will learn the most important skill of all - how to create the life of their dreams.

10. Trust in your children. They learned how to love, smile, crawl, walk, talk, run, dress themselves, and understand their world before starting school, and they will continue to grow and learn through homeschooling.

http://www.homeschool.com/articles/Aleks4/default.asp

Homeschooling Pros and Cons

As with anything, home education has its disadvantages. Here is a candid look at homeschooling pros and cons:

Pros	Cons
Children are taught according to their learning styles and interests.	Parents must help children improve upon their weaknesses and not just cater to their strengths.
Parents have more control over how and what their children are taught.	Parents take on sole responsibility for their children's education.
Children can progress slowly or quickly, according to their abilities.	Parents may feel inadequate to address the needs of gifted and special needs students.
Schedules revolve around family and allow time to bond with parents and siblings.	Extended time with family can strain tense relationships or lead to burnout on the part of the teaching parent.
Flexible schedules allow time for breaks, field trips, vacations.	Family crises, illness and lax supervision by parents can interfere with learning.

Curriculum for an entire year costs less than 1 month of private school tuition.	Parents must purchase own materials and still pay public school taxes.
Children spend time in a diverse, real world environment.	Parents must search for activities such as sports and music that are easily accessible at school.
Parents can transmit their values to children and shelter them from negative influence.	Parents must give children increasing independence and a chance to learn to stand for their values.

http://www.successful-homeschooling.com/homeschooling-pros-and-cons.html

Homeschooling vs Public Schooling

A comparison of homeschooling vs public schooling shows that a home school environment has many advantages over traditional classrooms.

I remember being afraid to tell my friends who are public school teachers about my decision to homeschool. Ironically, those who know the system best have been my biggest supporters, and many former public school teachers are deciding to educate their children at home.

Here is a comparison of homeschool vs. public school:

Academics

Homeschool	Public School
One on one, tutorial	30 to 1 student-teacher ratio
Parent directed and monitored	Limited parental involvement
Tailored to student learning style	Caters to visual and auditory learners
Students progress at their own pace	Adheres to arbitrary scope and sequence
Encourages discovery and love of learning	Encourages memorization
Two-way dialogue	Lecture

Balances academics with life skills	Removes student from day to day life
Decisions motivated by concern for student	Decisions tainted by financial and professional incentives

Environment

Homeschool	Public School
Cooperative	Competitive
Real life, multi-age	Segregated by age, race and income
Physically and emotionally safe	Danger of bullying, physical and verbal assault
Flexible, suits learner	Rigid, inhibits kinesthetic learners
Consistent, secure	Changes from year to year
Encourages students to do their best	Negative peer pressure
Allows time to pursue hobbies and interests	Wastes time on classroom management and busywork

Values

Homeschool	Public School
Independence	Dependence on teacher, government
Self-motivation	External rewards and consequences
Creativity	Adherence to standards

Tolerance, individuality	Pecking order, conformity
Discipline focuses on building character	Discipline focuses on classroom management
Community service	Materialism, entertainment
Family	Teachers, peers

http://www.successful-homeschooling.com/homeschooling-vs-public-schooling.html

Frequently Asked Questions
About Homeschooling

Q: What is homeschooling?
A: Homeschooling is the most flexible and diverse educational option available today. The variety of homeschooling styles reflects the diversity of the people who choose this method. Some families organize their homeschool the same as a traditional school, with the children studying the same subjects the same way as public school students. Some families use the opposite approach and "un-school" their children-a far less structured approach where the children's schedule is determined by their interests and readiness. Most homeschoolers, however, use an eclectic approach that is partly structured and partly interest-based. This method allows parents to pick and choose the classes and materials that meet their children's needs. These may be college or co-op classes, pool teaching, charter schools, independent study programs, apprenticeships, volunteering, and a host of options. Homeschooling is as unique as you are.

Q: What type of families homeschool their children?
A: Although homeschoolers are often stereotyped as hippies or religious fanatics, most homeschoolers are just normal parents who have decided to take charge of their children's education. Homeschoolers are everywhere and come from all walks of life. They live in cities, in the suburbs, and in the country. They are doctors and janitors and public school teachers. Some homeschoolers have strong religious beliefs and some are nonbelievers. Homeschoolers are just like you.

Q: Is homeschooling legal?
A: Homeschooling is legal in all fifty states and throughout Canada. Homeschooling is also becoming increasingly popular in Australia, New Zealand, England, and Japan. However, every state and province has its own laws regarding homeschooling and some are more "friendly" than others. Some homeschooling laws merely require you to let your local school district know that you will be homeschooling your children. Some

laws require you to fill out paperwork as if you were a private school. If you are considering homeschooling, you will need to get information on the current laws in your area. State or local homeschool groups are often the best source of information. A member of a support group in your state can advise you on how to register as a homeschooler in your state. It is NOT necessary to join a Legal Defense Fund.

Q: How much does homeschooling cost?
A: Depending on the choices you make, homeschooling can cost either a little or a lot. Generally, you can assume that homeschooling costs more than a public school education and less than a private school. If you had to, you could homeschool for free using public resources like libraries, PBS shows, museums, the Internet, and hand-me-down educational supplies.

In general, homeschooling costs more if you use a boxed curriculum or sign up with an independent study program. For example, in 2001, a complete fifth grade program costs $570 from Calvert School, $230 from Alpha Omega Publications, and $1,400 from Laurel Springs. Homeschooling costs are higher for teenagers than for elementary school students, and fees are normally charged on a per unit basis. Since many homeschool teens also take college classes, you will have to factor that into your educational budget.

You will also want to budget additional funding for extracurricular activities such as soccer, gymnastics, martial arts, piano lessons, and the like. Since homeschooled children have more time, they tend to participate in more of these activities.

The bottom line is that: (1) you have complete control over how much homeschooling will cost and (2) you can give your child a quality education no matter how much or how little money you have. Check out the depth of resources available in our resource guide: http://www.homeschool.com/resources/

Q: What are the advantages of homeschooling?
A: For many homeschoolers, one of the greatest benefits of homeschooling is the strengthening of family bonds. Homeschooling families spend lots of time learning and playing together and this naturally creates close ties between brothers and sisters and between children and parents. Homeschoolers also have a great deal of flexibility in how and what they learn, allowing them to learn about the "real world" by being part of it. These advantages allow homeschooled children to receive a superior education that is attuned specifically to their own needs, learning style, personality, and interests.

Q: What are the disadvantages of homeschooling?
A: According to homeschoolers' feedback on Homeschool.com, the biggest disadvantage facing the homeschooling family is loss of income. Someone must be home, at least part-time, to facilitate the children's learning. At a time when it can often be difficult to get by on two incomes, it can be a real challenge to get by on just one. Some of the other difficulties facing homeschooling parents include lack of confidence in their own and their children's abilities, public and/or family criticism, and adjusting

career goals and work schedules to accommodate the needs of the family. One last challenge humorously cited by homeschoolers is that of housekeeping. When you use your home full-time for homeschooling (and in some cases even for work), things can get a bit messy. But don't worry, those books piled high on the coffee table, the science experiment on the table, and the art project in the patio are all signs that your child is learning.

Q: How are homeschooled students doing socially?
A: It used to be that if you announced that you were going to homeschool your children people would ask you, "How will your children learn anything?" Now that fears have been put to rest regarding homeschoolers' academic achievement, the most commonly asked question is, "But what about socialization?" The assumption is that children will not learn to get along with others and will not develop good social skills unless they go to school. However, several studies have been conducted over the years that show that homeschooled children are more self-confident and less peer dependent than traditionally schooled students. Many people believe that homeschoolers spend all their time around the kitchen table, but that simply is not the case. Since homeschooled students do not spend six hours a day in a classroom sitting behind a desk, they have more time to participate in activities outside the home like music, sports, and Scouts. Also, whereas schoolchildren rarely have the opportunity to interact with the children who are not the same age, homeschooled children interact with and learn from people of all ages, genders, and interests.

Q: Will my child be able to get into college if they are homeschooled?
A: Homeschoolers are accepted and recruited by some of the top universities in the country because of their maturity, independent thinking skills, creativity, and strong academic preparation. As previously mentioned, homeschoolers perform above average on the ACT. Success on the ACT test reveals that the courses taken by high school students to prepare for college have been effective. Homeschoolers also placed highest on the SAT college entrance exams in the year 2000. In addition to academic success, homeschoolers have had athletic success in college. Coaches are recruiting homeschooled athletes, and in 2001 the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) declared about 100 homeschooled students eligible for athletics as freshmen at major universities, up from 85 the year before. An article in Time on September 11, 2000, reported that 26 percent of 35 homeschooled applicants had been accepted into Stanford University's 2000-2001 freshman class. This is nearly double the rate of overall acceptance.

Q: Will my children be able to succeed in the "real world" if they do not go to school?
A: Those exploring homeschooling for the first time sometimes worry that their child will not be able to function in the "real world" if they don't attend school and have the same social experiences as schooled children. But what do schools really do? They separate kids by age and ability, reinforce class and gender, and limit children's interactions to short recess periods. Schoolchildren are forced to socialize with children only their own age and are trapped in a room six to seven hours a day, allowed to view the outside

world only through a textbook. Where in the real world are adults forced to socialize with only someone their own age? Competition, bullying, consumerism, and cruel teasing are often the social values children learn at school. Homeschooled children are more likely to base their decisions on values they learned from their parents instead of feeling compelled to go along with the crowd and accept the behavior of what other children are displaying as the "norm". Because homeschoolers spend so much time out in the real world, they are able to communicate well and get along with both adults and children. They even get along with their siblings, and it is common for homeschooling families to receive positive comments about their children's strong, warm sibling relationships.

Q: Can I homeschool if I'm overseas?
A: Homeschooling is growing in popularity around the world, particularly in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and Japan. Still, homeschooling originated in the United States, and because of that there are more homeschooling resources and opportunities available in America than anywhere else. If you are an American living overseas, you can use an American independent study program to help you while you are away. If you plan on living overseas for an extended period of time and your child is in high school, you may want to consider participating in the international baccalaureate program, which gives your child an international diploma that he can use for admittance to some of the finest universities in the world.

http://www.homeschool.com/new/faq.asp

Frequently Asked Questions About

Homeschooling Young Children

with Linda Dobson

Linda Dobson is the author of several popular homeschooling books, including: "Homeschooling: The Early Years - Your Complete Guide to Successfully Homeschooling the 3- to 8-Year-Old Child (Prima, 1999). She is also the Early Years columnist for Home Education Magazine.

Q: At what age should I start homeschooling my young child?
A: Have you helped your child play pat-a-cake, sing the ABC song, tie a shoe? Have you guided your child until her inner drive sent her walking, talking, self-feeding? Truth is, any thoughtful parent "homeschools" long before her child sets foot in the schoolhouse door. The only reason we don't typically think in these terms is because we've been conditioned to believe there is a specific place to go at a specific time to be taught by specific people who have been "certified" to do so.

You've already begun homeschooling, even if you didn't call it that. I like to think of "official" homeschooling as merely continuing the very natural act of observing what your child seems eager to learn about the world around her, and helping her achieve her self-imposed goals, step-by-step, at a pace that keeps up with her desire yet doesn't frustrate.

You've already begun homeschooling, so just keep it up! The thing I remember best about homeschooling with early years children is how much fun it was...reading so many books together, reading, reading, reading, playing games that taught basic math concepts, writing short stories, poems, and letters to Grandma, taking long walks, answering questions or admitting didn't know and researching together, listening to long explanations of how they solved problems while working on their forts in the woods.

Have no fear. Your observation of needs and desires, coupled with trust in your love and in your child's innate push to learn, will more than cover the skills outlined on anybody's curriculum. The bottom line - no matter *where* your child learns - is that you as parent are responsible for her education. But by homeschooling, you will also be providing an extra, incredibly important opportunity to yourself and your child - the time together necessary to build strong family bonds and share your family's values. Learn to observe your child for indications of readiness, desire, and preferred approach to learning, and this will serve you well not only in the present but well into the future.

Start homeschooling your child? No! *Continue* homeschooling your child!

Q: How long should we homeschool each day?
A: The short answer to this, as kids today are likely to say is, "24-7." Again, think in terms of being free from the way government schools go about educating children. If you like schedules, stick with theirs. But realize that an evening trip to the grocery store, a weekend visit to the nature center, and even bedtime story hour are times available for learning together.

Some families sit down and do all their academic (book) work for a couple of hours each morning, freeing up the children's afternoons for personal pursuits. Others scatter book work throughout the day, or note that their children might sit down with a math book for 2 weeks straight, then not touch it again for a month. Sometimes families simply go through the course of a day and only take advantage of "teachable moments" as they arise.

As you begin to homeschool, and if you just observe what takes place in the course of a week or so, you'll begin to notice a "rhythm" - your family's personal rhythm. Here's where you'll get your best clues as to the best times for particular pursuits. Just one word of warning: When I did this, I saw that two of my children were night owls! Just about the time my mind and body were winding down, they were just getting into gear! This was definitely an impetus to help them become independent learners very quickly!

Q: What can I do with my toddler and infant when I need some time to focus on an activity with my homeschooling child?
A: Common sense will dictate what needs to be done for any particular situation. Homeschooling parents have found that infants are easily incorporated into the flow of a homeschooling lifestyle. Since you're not saddled into a school schedule, you have the flexibility to do more concentrated work during nursing time, sitting in the high chair time, nap time, or even bed time. Toddlers, full of energy and eager to explore, may require a little more strategic planning.

When I asked experienced homeschooling moms how they handle their toddlers, their answers could be placed in two categories: inclusion or diversion. Most of them prefer inclusion as they noticed the very real educational benefits of this.

Briefly, inclusion means listening to read-alouds as a family. While many of the books may be "over the toddler's head," it's incredible what they *do* pick up from these opportunities. It doesn't hurt the older child to listen to books aimed specifically at the toddler, either. Inclusion also means a "similar" activity. For example, if your older child is writing a poem, a younger child can feel included with a piece of paper and a crayon. Doing math? The younger child can play with manipulatives, too. Diversion methods include saving special play toys just for the occasion. If everyone moves outside, the little ones can play in the sand box within easy viewing. Computer games help, as does the occasional Winnie the Pooh video some folks were loathe to confess to. Finally, Dad was an often-mentioned, popular diversion, asked upon arriving home to run to the store or to enjoy the park for "just a little bit." One piece of advice one Mom shared that is worth repeating: "Go to the young ones before they're clamoring, saturate them with attention, then return to your teaching."

Q: Do I need a computer in order to homeschool?
A: A computer is a learning tool and, like other learning tools, would be nice to have at your disposal. However, no one should decide against homeschooling simply because there isn't a computer sitting in the living room.

With all the wonderful software available today, a computer can literally turn learning phonics or addition and subtraction into a game. Many homeschoolers are finding that email actually increases their children's desire to write, and with the additional practice comes additional proficiency more quickly. (Spelling skills improve, too, as most children want their messages to look right.) When your child asks how they make chocolate chips, a visit to the Internet can provide the answer in a matter of minutes.

The flip side of all these benefits of owning a computer is concern with the possible negative effects on early years children's health; everything from eyesight to back strain and lack of exercise, repetitive motion injuries to radiation exposure. Unfortunately, computers haven't been around long enough yet for researchers to provide definitive answers to these concerns.

Until we do have more concrete information, moderation is key to ensuring that computer use remains a positive for learning. Used computers and software have become a dime a dozen on popular Internet auction sites, and prices on older computers have dropped dramatically. Oh, and don't forget that libraries across the country are receiving grants and greatly reduced telephone bills to help them purchase and run computers, and keep good software on hand for patrons.

Q: What are some of the benefits of homeschooling the early years child?
A: Here are the top five.
1) Knowledge base — Because they are free of the government school approach to learning, homeschoolers generally find their children learn more in a shorter period of time. This may be credited to your deep knowledge of your children's needs and interests as you focus on just a few children instead of a classroom full. You can easily tune in to how your child learns best, know "when" is a good time to pursue something, and build on strengths and shore up weaknesses.

2) Increased social opportunities — I know, I know. If you've been doing any research on homeschooling at all you've come across critics' claims that homeschooled children are chained to kitchen tables all day long and so will be socially retarded as they enter adulthood. I don't believe any negative claim about homeschooling has been as off the mark as this one. Not only does homeschooling allow a child to socialize beyond the government school construct of "sit with same age peers all day" to provide them with the skills necessary to socialize with a wide age range of people, it also allows a family to avoid the very real *negative* socialization that has become the topic of so many news headlines of late. Increasingly, school socialization consists of violence, sex, drugs and alcohol, and a tendency to undermine family values.

3) Stronger family ties — The gift of time available during homeschooling is *key* to creating and maintaining strong family relationships. While this is obvious in both the parent-child and sibling-sibling relationships, the benefits reach to extended family relationships as well, allowing aunts and uncles, Grandma and Grandpa to participate, or be visited at a time convenient for family members and not the school schedule (a time, by the way, when record numbers of Americans typically travel, driving up the cost, the traffic, and the accidents).

4) It's safer — While I hate the idea that government schools have become so dangerous as for this to even be a consideration, it is. I cringe each time I see how another school becomes more and more indistinguishable from a prison -- metal detectors, body searches, armed guards, drug sniffing dogs, and more. More and more families are turning to homeschooling every day because of concerns for their children's safety.

5) It's healthier — Now here's a benefit not too many people have spoken about to date, but it's been recognized by homeschooling families across the country. Many parents report the number of colds and other viruses their children fall victim to markedly decrease when they come home. Many claim their children spend so much

time outside getting exercise in the fresh air that their children are healthy as horses. Additionally, there's sleep deprivation associated with school attendance (finally being noticed!), sick buildings with poor circulation and ventilation, and increased symptoms of stress in ever younger children. These problems just don't exist in homeschooling! Families who have children with both short and long-term health needs report they are much easier to deal with in the flexible homeschooling approach than they are when trying to meet the requirements of a school schedule.

http://www.homeschool.com/advisors/dobson/

Homeschooling Laws

Is Homeschooling Legal?

You don't need to avoid public places during school hours. Although homeschooling laws vary, home education is legal in all 50 states!

Though the United States Supreme Court has upheld parents' rights to home educate, each state has different homeschool laws.

Here's a list of the criteria that make up the homeschooling requirements of each state, and a summary of the history of homeschooling.

I live in The Lone Star State, so we'll take an in depth look at homeschooling in Texas.

And for those who are concerned about our state's parent-friendly home school laws, I'll discuss homeschooling qualifications, homeschool testing and answer the question Are homeschool laws necessary?

I am not an attorney, and the information on this website does not constitute legal advice. For more information on complying with homeschool laws in your state, visit the Home School Legal Defense Association.

Homeschooling Requirements

The Supreme Court has upheld parents' rights to home educate, but decisions about homeschooling requirements are left to individual states. Some states have more than one legal option under which parents can choose to homeschool.

State homeschooling laws vary in their treatment of the following homeschool requirements:

Compulsory School Age – the ages between which a child must receive formal instruction. Some states require instruction as young as age 5, and some allow delayed instructions under certain conditions.

Attendance – the minimum number of hours or days a student must receive instruction. Because homeschool schedules are so efficient, homeschoolers can find creative ways to meet these requirements. At home, a child is learning whenever he or she is awake.

Subjects – the subjects a student must be taught. Some states require home schools to teach the same subjects that are taught public schools. Some states require specific subjects such as hygiene and the effects of alcohol. Some states have no requirement at all.

Qualifications – the criteria that must be met by a parent, tutor or homeschooling program. Some states require parents to have a high school diploma or GED. Others require a college degree, certificate or evaluation by a certified teacher. Some have no criteria at all.

Here's a simple test that will assess your homeschooling qualifications.

Notice – information that must be provided to notify the state of your decision to home educate. Some states do not require notice. Others require one time notice or annual notification.

Records – information that must be kept regarding your home school. Some states require parents to keep attendance records, which I find odd as homeschoolers are typically at home every day. Some states require submission of a portfolio or quarterly report.

Testing – tests that must be taken periodically to assess a child's progress. Some states simply require students to be tested, some states require the students to be tested and report their results, and some require students to be tested, report the results and develop an action plan if a specific score is not achieved.

Here is a closer look at homeschool testing.

Though homeschooling requirements vary from state to state, studies have shown that there is no correspondence between the level of government regulation of homeschoolers and children's academic performance.

For details about your state's laws, visit the Homeschool Legal Defense Association's website.

http://www.successful-homeschooling.com/homeschooling-requirements.html

Homeschool Approaches and Learning Styles

Homeschooling Approaches

Although every family is unique, certain homeschooling approaches have become popular in one form or another. Most homeschoolers do not exactly follow one style or method, but rather select ideas and methods from among different approaches to best fit their family's needs. Many of these methods have several common elements such as defined objectives, lesson plans, frequent library visits, family nights, portfolios, and even tutoring and mentoring. When looking at the differences between homeschooling approaches, it is important to see what they have in common as well as their differences.

The first step in choosing a homeschooling approach is to gather information about the options that exist. Ask yourself a few questions to help you decide what homeschooling methods best fit your family. Are you a highly organized person? Do you like your day to be predictable, or are you inclined to stay flexible, ready to adapt to changing circumstances? Would you prefer that you not be told what to do? Do you want your curriculum to be planned for you, with teacher instructions and worksheets for the children? Or do you want to be able to pick and choose which books they read and which activities to engage in?

As you study these descriptions and talk to experienced homeschoolers, you can start to get a feel for the style that best fits you and your family.

The following are the most popular homeschooling approaches:

School-at-Home

School-at-home is the style most often portrayed in the media because it is so easy to understand and can be accompanied by a photo of children studying around the kitchen table. This is also the most expensive method and the style with the highest burnout rate. Most families who follow the school-at-home approach purchase a boxed curriculum that comes with textbooks, study schedules, grades, and record keeping.

Unit Studies

Unit studies use your child's interest and then ties that interest into subject areas like math, reading, spelling, science, art and history. For example, if you have a child who is interested in ancient Egypt, you would learn the history of Egypt, read books about Egypt, write stories about Egypt, do art projects about pyramids, and learn about Egyptian artifacts or mapping skills to map out a catacomb.

Unschooling

Unschooling is also known as natural, interest-led, and child-led learning. Unschoolers learn from everyday life experiences and do not use school schedules or formal lessons. Instead, unschooled children follow their interests and learn in much the same way as adults do—by pursuing an interest or curiosity. Unschooled children learn their math, science, reading and history in the same way that children learn to walk and talk.

"Relaxed" or "Eclectic" Homeschooling

"Relaxed" or "Eclectic" homeschooling is the method used most often by homeschoolers. Basically, eclectic homeschoolers use a little of this and a little of that such as workbooks for math, reading, and spelling, and taking an unschooling approach for the other subjects.

Classical Homeschooling

The "classical" method began in the Middle Ages and was the approach used by some of the greatest minds in history. The goal of the classical approach is to teach people how to learn for themselves. The five tools of learning, known as the Trivium, are reason, record, research, relate, and rhetoric. Younger children begin with the preparing stage, where they learn basic reading, writing, and arithmetic. The grammar stage is next, which emphasizes compositions and collections, and then the dialectic stage, where serious reading, study, and research take place. All the tools come together in the rhetoric stage, where communication is the primary focus.

The Charlotte Mason Method

The Charlotte Mason method has at its core the belief that children deserve respect and that they learn best from real-life situations. According to Charlotte Mason, children should be given time to play, create, and be involved in real-life situations from which they can learn. Students of the Charlotte Mason method take nature walks, visit art museums, and learn geography, history, and literature from "living books," books that make these subjects come alive. Students also show what they know, not by taking tests, but via narration and discussion.

The Waldorf Method

The Waldorf method is also used by some homeschoolers. Waldorf education is based on the work of Rudolf Steiner and stresses the importance of educating the whole child—body, mind, and spirit. In the early grades, there is an emphasis on arts and crafts, music and movement, and nature. Older children are taught to develop self-awareness and how to reason things out for themselves. Children in a Waldorf homeschool do not use standard textbooks; instead, the children create their own books.

Montessori

Montessori materials are also popular in some households. The Montessori method emphasizes "errorless learning," where the children learn at their own pace and in that way develop their full potential. The Montessori homeschool emphasizes beauty and avoids things that are confusing or cluttered. Wooden tools are preferred over plastic tools, and learning materials are kept well-organized and ready to use. Most homeschoolers use the Montessori method for younger children.

Multiple Intelligences

"Multiple intelligences" is an idea developed by Howard Gardner and Harvard University's "project zero." The belief is that everyone is intelligent in his or her own way and that learning is easiest and most effective when it uses a person's strengths instead of their weakness. For example, most schools use a linguistic and logical-mathematical approach when teaching, but not everyone learns that way. Some students, the bodily kinesthetic learners for example, learn best by touching and not by listening or reading. Most successful homeschoolers naturally emphasize their children's strengths and automatically tailor their teaching to match their child's learning style. Successful homeschoolers also adjust their learning environment and schedule so that it brings out their child's' best. The goal for the homeschooling parents is to identify how, when, and what their child learns best and to adapt their teaching style to their child.

Hybrid Homeschooling (part-time)

Hybrid homeschoolers work in the middle ground between a traditional type of schooling, and homeschooling. Many hybrid homeschoolers work with their public school system or utilize co-op classes, tutors, and even private school programs. While hybrids work with a more traditional type of schooling, they only do this a few days per week. Homeschoolers find this method more appealing as children get older, because it provides a more structured environment for the child, and can take a lot of weight off of the parents shoulders as well as free up a good deal of your time. One program that offers a hybrid option is iQ Academy.

Internet Homeschooling

The Internet Homeschooling method has become a widespread phenomenon that allows homeschoolers to harness the power of the Internet by accessing virtual tutors, virtual schools, online curriculum, and quality websites. Parents are turning to this method because they can set their own schedule, learn online wherever there is internet access, talk to teachers one on one whenever their child needs help, and can study subjects that interest their child. Also, schools like iQ Academy, let you work at your own pace, and even provide students with a laptop*.

http://www.homeschool.com/articles/IQAcademy3/default.asp

Why Are Learning Styles Important?

There are a few very good reasons you should know your children's learning styles:

1. **If you know your children's learning styles, you'll be far better equipped to teach them.**

   Most parents assume their children learn exactly like they do. For instance, if the parents are visual learners, it's not at all uncommon for them to expect their kids to be visual learners, too. But children often have different learning styles than their parents. Furthermore, they often have different learning styles than their siblings. The sooner you understand learning styles and which learning styles your children have, the sooner you'll be able to connect with them on a deeper and more meaningful level, and the sooner you'll be able to teach them effectively.

2. **You'll be far better prepared to choose a homeschooling curriculum.**

   Without knowing your children's learning styles, you may choose a curriculum that doesn't reach your children where they're at. It might do a decent enough job of educating them, but it won't give them an *optimal* education. Once you know your children's learning styles, you can choose a homeschooling curriculum that meets their needs... and you can be confident about your decision.

3. **You'll know how to help your children understand others.**

   Kids get frustrated just like adults, many times because of their failure to communicate effectively with others. By understanding the different learning styles yourself, you can then help your children understand them too, which will help them relate to and communicate better with the various people in their life.

We believe it's essential to know your children's learning styles. If you don't, you may continually experience frustration with your children, and that's no way to go through life. Better to take the time now to understand how your children learn, not only for their sakes but for your sake, too!

http://www.sonlight.com/learning-styles.html

Teaching and Relating to Your Child's Learning Style

Dateline: 10/20/04

By Lorraine Peoples

The Visual Learner

If the child learns best by seeing (a visual learner), he will observe every little facial expression you make to figure out how you are responding to him. If you are a visual learner, be very aware that you are sending messages, both positive and negative. Your smiling eyes or smile will be recognized as approval of what he's doing, and encourage him to continue. A frown, however slight, will make your child look away from you, sort of like a head-down pouty look. If that happens, acknowledge the feelings, talk to him. By the same token, you can easily read his facial expressions to figure out how he is responding to what you are teaching. If you are not a visual learner, and your child is, you will need to deliberately send visual messages through facial expressions. You will also need to deliberately study his facial expressions to see how he's reacting or feeling. Pictures, videos, TV and people watching are important to him and a good way to teach him. Visual images can distract him from concentrating.

The Auditory Learner

If the child learns best by hearing, (an auditory learner) he will be very sensitive to your voice tone and inflections. If your voice is too firm or you raise the pitch, he may sense you are angry or frustrated with him. When you acknowledge his successes, he will know how sincere you are. If you correct or tell him what to do repeatedly, he may think you are nagging and "turn you off." Think of this student as having a tape recorder in his head. He will hear what you said over and over, even after the lesson is over. Even something that you might have thought he didn't understand, will "replay" for him, and he'll "get it". This child doesn't have to look at you to understand what you are saying. He even hears you mutter or speak in the adjoining room! . If you're visual, it may bother you that he doesn't look at you when you're speaking. You need that; he doesn't. This may drive you nuts. It's OK to explain to him that you know he learns best by hearing. Tell him you know he doesn't have to look at you to understand. Share with him that you are visual, and you do need him to look at you so you can understand. You might tell him that more people are visual learners than auditory learners, so it's a good social skill for him to learn to look at people when they speak to him. Lessons on tape recorders or other equipment that requires wearing headphones will be especially good for him. Noises can distract him from concentrating.

The Kinesthetic Learner

If your child learns best by doing, (a kinesthetic learner) he will seem to have some part of his body moving constantly. He'll be a wiggler, a toucher, and want to be close to another person whether that person wants it or not. He'll drum his fingers, rock, switch positions in a chair often, and have a high capability of being inattentive. So, since you know he needs to touch, wiggle and be active, your lessons need to provide that. He gets weary of being told to sit or stand still. Allow him to take an active part of your lessons. If you're giving a lesson on paper, give him a pencil or crayon to use. . If using a lesson printed on a transparency, give him a temporary marker to use -- that's usually a different tool for him and feels very special. Give him specific directions, such as underlining the vowel as you say the words, or put the whiskers on the cat. If he needs to listen, give him something to hold while he listens, and can feel. If your student is a girl, give her a bracelet to wear so she can feel it when she feels a little wiggly. It's OK to tell

your student how he best learns, so he can understand that his wiggliness may prevent him from paying good attention to his lessons. Let him know you'll try to teach him in the way he learns sometimes, but that you'll also have him practice listening without wiggling or touching, because it's a good social skill to learn. This child's learning style is his distraction!

http://homeschooling.gomilpitas.com/articles/102004.htm

This chart helps you determine your learning style; read the word in the left column and then answer the questions in the successive three columns to see how you respond to each situation. Your answers may fall into all three columns, but one column will likely contain the most answers. The dominant column indicates your primary learning style.

***When you*..**	**Visual**	**Auditory**	**Kinesthetic & Tactile**
Spell	Do you try to see the word?	Do you sound out the word or use a phonetic approach?	Do you write the word down to find if it feels right?
Talk	Do you sparingly but dislike listening for too long? Do you favor words such as *see, picture*, and *imagine*?	Do you enjoy listening but are impatient to talk? Do you use words such as *hear, tune*, and *think*?	Do you gesture and use expressive movements? Do you use words such as *feel, touch*, and *hold*?
Concentrate	Do you become distracted by untidiness or movement?	Do you become distracted by sounds or noises?	Do you become distracted by activity around you?
Meet someone again	Do you forget names but remember faces or remember where you met?	Do you forget faces but remember names or remember what you talked about?	Do you remember best what you did together?
Contact people on business	Do you prefer direct, face-to-face, personal meetings?	Do you prefer the telephone?	Do you talk with them while walking or participating in an activity?
Read	Do you like descriptive scenes or pause to imagine the actions?	Do you enjoy dialog and conversation or hear the characters talk?	Do you prefer action stories or are not a keen reader?
Do something new at work	Do you like to see demonstrations, diagrams, slides, or	Do you prefer verbal instructions or talking about it with	Do you prefer to jump right in and try it?

	posters?	someone else?	
Put something together	Do you look at the directions and the picture?		Do you ignore the directions and figure it out as you go along?
Need help with a computer application	Do you seek out pictures or diagrams?	Do you call the help desk, ask a neighbor, or growl at the computer?	Do you keep trying to do it or try it on another computer?

Adapted from Colin Rose(1987). Accelerated Learning.

Multiple Intelligences

he theory of multiple intelligences was developed in 1983 by Dr. Howard Gardner, professor of education at Harvard University. It suggests that the traditional notion of intelligence, based on I.Q. testing, is far too limited. Instead, Dr. Gardner proposes eight different intelligences to account for a broader range of human potential in children and adults. These intelligences are:

Linguistic intelligence ("word smart"):
Logical-mathematical intelligence ("number/reasoning smart")
Spatial intelligence ("picture smart")
Bodily-Kinesthetic intelligence ("body smart")
Musical intelligence ("music smart")
Interpersonal intelligence ("people smart")
Intrapersonal intelligence ("self smart")
Naturalist intelligence ("nature smart")

Dr. Gardner says that our schools and culture focus most of their attention on linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligence. We esteem the highly articulate or logical people of our culture. However, Dr. Gardner says that we should also place equal attention on individuals who show gifts in the other intelligences: the artists, architects, musicians, naturalists, designers, dancers, therapists, entrepreneurs, and others who enrich the world in which we live. Unfortunately, many children who have these gifts don't receive much reinforcement for them in school. Many of these kids, in fact, end up being labeled "learning disabled," "ADD (attention deficit disorder," or simply underachievers, when their unique ways of thinking and learning aren't addressed by a heavily linguistic or logical-mathematical classroom. The theory of multiple intelligences proposes a major transformation in the way our schools are run. It suggests that teachers be trained to present their lessons in a wide variety of ways using music, cooperative learning, art activities, role play, multimedia, field trips, inner reflection, and much more (see Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom). The good news is that the theory of multiple intelligences has grabbed the attention of many educators around the country, and hundreds of schools are currently using its philosophy to redesign the way it educates

children. The bad news is that there are thousands of schools still out there that teach in the same old dull way, through dry lectures, and boring worksheets and textbooks. The challenge is to get this information out to many more teachers, school administrators, and others who work with children, so that each child has the opportunity to learn in ways harmonious with their unique minds (see In Their Own Way).

The theory of multiple intelligences also has strong implications for adult learning and development. Many adults find themselves in jobs that do not make optimal use of their most highly developed intelligences (for example, the highly bodily-kinesthetic individual who is stuck in a linguistic or logical desk-job when he or she would be much happier in a job where they could move around, such as a recreational leader, a forest ranger, or physical therapist). The theory of multiple intelligences gives adults a whole new way to look at their lives, examining potentials that they left behind in their childhood (such as a love for art or drama) but now have the opportunity to develop through courses, hobbies, or other programs of self-development (see 7 Kinds of Smart).

How to Teach or Learn Anything 8 Different Ways

One of the most remarkable features of the theory of multiple intelligences is how it provides *eight different potential pathways* to learning. If a teacher is having difficulty reaching a student in the more traditional linguistic or logical ways of instruction, the theory of multiple intelligences suggests several other ways in which the material might be presented to facilitate effective learning. Whether you are a kindergarten teacher, a graduate school instructor, or an adult learner seeking better ways of pursuing self-study on any subject of interest, the same basic guidelines apply. Whatever you are teaching or learning, see how you might connect it with

words (linguistic intelligence)
numbers or logic (logical-mathematical intelligence)
pictures (spatial intelligence)
music (musical intelligence)
self-reflection (intrapersonal intelligence)
a physical experience (bodily-kinesthetic intelligence)
a social experience (interpersonal intelligence), and/or
an experience in the natural world. (naturalist intelligence)

For example, if you're teaching or learning about the law of supply and demand in economics, you might read about it (linguistic), study mathematical formulas that express it (logical-mathematical), examine a graphic chart that illustrates the principle (spatial), observe the law in the natural world (naturalist) or in the human world of commerce (interpersonal); examine the law in terms of your own body [e.g. when you supply your body with lots of food, the hunger demand goes down; when there's very little supply, your stomach's demand for food goes way up and you get hungry] (bodily-kinesthetic and intrapersonal); and/or write a song (or find an existing song) that demonstrates the law (perhaps Dylan's "Too Much of Nothing?").

You don't have to teach or learn something in all eight ways, just see what the possibilities are, and then decide which particular pathways interest you the most, or seem to be the most effective teaching or learning tools. The theory of multiple intelligences is so intriguing because it expands our horizon of available teaching/learning tools beyond the conventional linguistic and logical methods used in most schools (e.g. lecture, textbooks, writing assignments, formulas, etc.). To get started, put the topic of whatever you're interested in teaching or learning about in the center of a blank sheet of paper, and draw eight straight lines or "spokes" radiating out from this topic. Label each line with a different intelligence. Then start brainstorming ideas for teaching or learning that topic and write down ideas next to each intelligence (this is a spatial-linguistic approach of brainstorming; you might want to do this in other ways as well, using a tape-recorder, having a group brainstorming session, etc.). Have fun!

http://www.thomasarmstrong.com/multiple_intelligences.htm

How Can I Find Out My Child's Learning Style?

To discover your child's learning style you may observe what your child likes and enjoys doing most while he/she is playing, interacting or learning. One thing will become quite obvious – certain kids like to learn things in a certain way while others are more comfortable learning the same thing in another way. The way each individual child prefers to learn, is essentially, that child's learning style. For example, children who love to have stories read to them may differ in their learning style from those who prefer to play with blocks, sing songs, or role-play with other children.

The following is based on Gardner's Multiple Intelligences and will help you to access your child's learning style. Check the statements that apply to your child in each intelligence category.

Logical-Mathematical Intelligence

Does your child:

- Enjoy math class?
- Enjoy solving math problems or adding numbers in his/her head?
- Like to work with computers?
- Ask questions about how things work?
- Enjoy strategy games, logic puzzles or brainteasers?
- Like playing chess or checkers?
- Enjoy doing science experiments?

Linguistic Intelligence

Does your child:

- Enjoy reading books?
- Like to learn new words and use them when talking or writing?
- Like to tell and listen to stories?
- Have a good memory for people, places, names, and dates?
- Get irritated when someone uses language that is grammatically incorrect?

Spatial intelligence

Does your child:

- Like to draw pictures or;
- Doodles a lot on notebooks?
- Daydream a lot?
- Read maps, charts, or diagrams more easily than text?
- Find his/her way around a new place without any direction?
- Enjoy taking things apart and then putting them back together?
- Enjoy building three-dimensional objects, (example: LEGO)?

Bodily-kinesthetic Intelligence

Does your child:

- Move around or tap when sitting somewhere for a long time?
- Enjoy activities like swimming, running, riding a bicycle or skating?
- Use body movement and hand gestures when talking to people?
- Like to touch something that is new to him/her?
- Learn to play new sports easily and exercise without getting tired?
- Show different physical sensations while thinking or working?
- Imitate other people's gestures?

Musical Intelligence

Does your child:

- Enjoy listening to music?
- Like to sing or hum?
- Get annoyed when music sounds off-key?
- Enjoy playing a musical instrument?
- Easily remember the melodies of songs after listening only once?
- Have a good voice to sing?

Interpersonal Intelligence

Does your child:

- Have two or more close friends?
- Understand their friends' feelings from their facial expressions, gestures and voice.
- Care about their friends' feelings?
- Approach others with empathy?
- Help friends to solve their problems?
- Seem to be street smart?
- Take place in school organizations and clubs?
- Seem to be a natural leader?

Intrapersonal Intelligence

Does your child:

- Like to be alone?
- Need a quiet place to work by himself/herself?
- Accurately expresses how he/she is feeling?
- Have an interest or hobby that he/she does not like to talk about?
- Display a sense of independence or strong will?
- Possess the ability to be aware of his/her strengths and weaknesses

Does My Child Possess More Than One Learning Style?

Yes. The theory of multiple intelligence claims that human beings possess at least seven types of mental functioning or intelligence, therefore, every individual has the ability to use every learning style. However, everybody has one or two styles that work better for him or her when they learn.

http://www.casacanada.com/howcan.html

Left Vs. Right

Which Side Are You On?

Basic Right Brain and Left Brain Characteristics

In general the left and right hemispheres of your brain process information in different ways. We tend to process information using our dominant side. However, the learning and thinking process is enhanced when both side of the brain participate in a balanced manner. This means strengthening your less dominate hemisphere of the brain. Listed below are information processing styles that are characteristically used by your right or left brain hemisphere. Read the information below to help you understand how your brain processes information. Pay attention to your less dominant style so that you can learn how to improve it.

Linear Vs. Holistic Processing Logical Vs. Intuitive

Sequential Vs. Random Processing Verbal Vs. Nonverbal Processing

Symbolic Vs. Concrete Processing Reality-Based Vs. Fantasy-Oriented Processing

Linear Vs. Holistic Processing

The left side of the brain processes information in a linear manner. It processes from part to whole. It takes pieces, lines them up, and arranges them in a logical order; then it draws conclusions. The right brain however, processes from whole to parts, holistically. It starts with the answer. It sees the big picture first, not the details. If you are right-brained, you may have difficulty following a lecture unless you are given the big picture first. That is why it is absolutely necessary for a right-brained person to read an assigned chapter or background information before a lecture or to survey a chapter before reading. If an instructor doesn't consistently give an overview before he or she begins a lecture, you may need to ask at the end of class what the next lecture will be and how you can prepare for it. If you are predominantly right-brained, you may also have trouble outlining (You've probably written many papers first and outlined them latter because an outline was required). You're the student who needs to know why you are doing something. Left-brained students would do well to exercise their right-brain in such a manner.

Sequential Vs. Random Processing

In addition to thinking in a linear manner, the left brain processes in sequence. The left brained person is a list maker. If you are left brained, you would enjoy making master schedules and and daily planning. You complete tasks in order and take pleasure in checking them off when they are accomplished. Likewise, learning things in sequence is relatively easy for you. For example, spelling involves sequencing - if you are left-brained, you are probability a good speller. The left brain is also at work in the linear and
sequential processing of math and in
following directions.

By, contrast, the approach of the right brained student is random. If you are right-brained, you may flit from one tack to another. You will get just as much done, but perhaps without having addressed priorities. An assignment may be late or incomplete, not because you weren't working but because you were working on something else. You were ready to rebel when asked to make study schedules for the week. But because of the random nature of your dominant side, you must make lists, and you must make schedules. This may be your only hope for survival in college. You should also make a special effort to read directions. Oh yes, the mention of spelling makes you cringe. Use the dictionary, carry a Franklin speller, use the spell checker on your computer. Never turn in an assignment without proofing for spelling. Because the right side of the brain is color sensitive, you might try using colors to learn sequence, making the first step green, the second blue, the last red. Or you may want to "walk" a sequence, either by physically going from place to place or by imagining it. For the first step of the sequence, you might walk to the frond door; for the second, to the kitchen; for the third, to the den, etc. Or make Step One a

certain place or thing in you dorm room or study place, and Step Two another. If you consistently use the same sequence, you will find that this strategy is transferable to many tasks involving sequence.

Symbolic Vs. Concrete Processing

The left brain has no trouble processing symbols. Many academic pursuits deal with symbols-such as letters, words, and mathematical notations. The left brained person tends to be comfortable with linguistic and mathematical endeavors. Left-brained students will probably just memorize vocabulary words or math formulas. The right brain, on the other hand, wants things to be concrete. The right brain person wants to see, feel, or touch the real object. Right brain students may have had trouble learning to read using phonics. They prefer to see words in context, to see how the formula works. To use your right brain, create opportunities for hands-on activities, use something real whenever possible. You may also want to draw out a math problem or illustrate your notes.

Logical Vs. Intuitive Processing

The left brain processes in a linear, sequential, logical manner. When you process on the left side, you use information piece by piece to solve a math problem or work out a science experiment. When you read and listen, you look for the pieces so that you can draw logical conclusions. If you process primarily on the right side of the brain, you use intuition. You may know the right answer to a math problem but not be sure how you got it. You may have to start with the answer and work backwards. On a quiz, you have a gut feeling as to which answers are correct, and you are usually right. In writing, it is the left brain that pays attention to mechanics such as spelling, agreement, and punctuation. But the right side pays attention to coherence and meaning; that is, your right brain tells you it "feels" right.

Verbal Vs. Nonverbal Processing

Left brain students have little trouble expressing themselves in words. Right brain students may know what they mean, but often have trouble finding the right words. The best illustration of this is to listen to people give directions. The left brain person will say something like "From here, go west three blocks and turn north on Vine Street. Go three or four miles and then turn east onto Broad Street." The right brain person will sound something like this: "Turn right (pointing right), by the church over there (pointing again). Then you will pass a McDonalds and a Walmart. At the next light, turn right toward the BP station." So how is this relevant to planning study strategies? Right brain students need to back up everything visually. If it's not written down, they probably won't remember it. And it would be even better for right brain students to illustrate it. They need to get into the habit of making a mental video of things as they hear or read them. Right brain students need to know that it may take them longer to write a paper and the paper may need more revision before it says what they want it to say. This means allowing extra time when a writing assignment is due.

Reality-Based Vs. Fantasy-Oriented Processing

The left side of the brain deals with things the way they are-with reality. When left brain students are affected by the environment, they usually adjust to it. Not so with right brain students. They try to change the environment! Left brain people want to know the rules and follow them. In fact, if there are no rules for situations, they will probably make up rules to follow! Left brain students know the consequences of not turning in papers on time or of failing a test. But right brain students are sometimes not aware that there is anything wrong. So, if you are right brain, make sure you constantly ask for feedback and reality checks. It's too late the day before finals to ask if you can do extra credit. Keep a careful record of your assignments and tests. Visit with your professor routinely. While this fantasy orientation may seem a disadvantage, in some cases it is an advantage. The right brain student is creative. In order to learn about the digestive system, you may decide to "become a piece of food! And since emotion is processed on the right side of the brain, you will probably remember well anything you become emotionally involved in as you are trying to learn.

These are just some of the differences that exist between the left and right hemispheres, but you can see a pattern. Because left brain strategies are the ones used most often in the classroom, right brain students sometimes feel inadequate. However, you now know that you can be flexible and adapt material to the right side of your brain. Likewise, those of you who are predominantly left brain know that it would be wise to use both sides of the brain and employ some right brain strategies.

http://brain.web-us.com/brain/LRBrain.html

Teaching Strategies

How to Adjust Your Teaching Style to Your Students' Learning Style

Sharon Longert

Overview

Everyday we make instructional decisions before, during, and after we meet our students. These decisions lead us to tailor instruction to individuals or groups in our classrooms. Often the populations we work with have been labeled and our decisions are made in terms of these labels.

But within a label we will likely find academically diverse learners and this is why we need to move beyond the labels and make curriculum choices that complement our students' interests, strengths and needs. Helping students to link what they are learning to daily living experiences keeps them engaged and motivated in the learning process.

The effective teacher is constantly making decisions about how to present information to achieve this, as well as monitoring and adjusting presentations to accommodate individual differences and enhance the learning of all students.

When presenting content, effective teachers gain their students' attention, interact positively with the students, review previously covered material, and provide an organization for the material, (e.g., graphic organizers, outlines, anticipation guides). Clear directions, adequate examples, and practice need to be provided in a relevant context for students.
In addition, it is always important to keep in mind that some students learn facts more easily, while others are more adept at grasping concepts, some prefer concrete examples, others prefer abstract examples. Now to some specific basics.

Listening

We take listening for granted, and like anything taken for granted, it's important to occasionally revisit it for a fresh perspective. With that in mind, consider the following:

- Listening is the cornerstone of learning.
- Listening requires directing one's attention to what is being said and then making sense of it.
- Listening is a skill and requires practice.
- Students spend over half of their time in school listening.
- Most students can think at a much faster rate than people can speak, in order to gain and maintain students' attention, they need to be listening first.
- Some special needs students may need more time to process information while listening.

To ensure that all students are listening to the lesson, stop periodically and ask them to summarize in their own words; record any questions they have; respond or react to

anything they have heard; or record, draw or write any other things that capture their thoughts. These form the basis for a Speak, Listen, Respond Log.

Activating Prior Knowledge
The prior knowledge a student brings to the lesson is key to linking to other learning. Effective teachers do not make assumptions about students' prior knowledge, rather they plan for them.

- Review the content or skills from the previous lesson. This is the place for scaffolding information, as well as checking that skills from the previous lessons are accurately acquired. If the lessons haven't been understood, now is the time to reteach them.
- Provide an anticipatory set to students at the start of the lesson to pique their interest and to help them connect to the content.
- Reveal the key components of the lesson to students so they can be motivated to respond and practice what they learn.

Reviewing
Reviewing the previous lesson provides distributed practice (a little bit each time repeatedly), and over time the information becomes automatic and can be called up from memory with little effort. These reviews are brief, fast and engaging and serve as a launching pad for the new lesson. Students can become the "teacher" for this portion of the lesson. A brief pre-planning meeting with student reviewers will ensure that they understand the format, content and the time period for delivery of the review.

Monitoring
Monitoring involves making decisions about how to provide feedback and how to keep students actively engaged while delivering instruction. Feedback should be immediate, frequent and provide explicit information that supports correct responses and models for improving incorrect responses. One way to monitor students' progress is by walking around the classroom while the students are responding in their Logs. This is the perfect opportunity to provide clarification or to have students work with a study buddy. (Adapted from Merrill Harmin's Strategies to Inspire Active Learning, Christopher-Gordon Publishers, 1995).

http://www.teachersnetwork.org/ntol/howto/adjust/basics.htm

Organizing the Learning Environment

by **Sharon Longert**

"Classroom environments are most effective when they are literate and purposeful, organized and accessible, and, most of all, authentic" (Miller, 2008). Teaching and learning is difficult in an environment that is cluttered, unorganized and unfriendly to kids and teachers. We spend a lot of time in our classrooms so they need to be interesting places that welcome everyone in the pursuit of knowledge. Your classroom reflects what you value, what you believe about teaching and learning, and what you know about your students. Anyone walking into that room should be able to articulate those values.

- The first step is to reorganize specific areas by sorting through and making piles of things to keep, things someone else may want or need, and things to throw away. Closets, bookcases, supply areas, and under and over spots need to be vacated. Arm yourself with a lot of trash bags and a cleaning spray; make sure to warn the custodian ahead of time.
- Next, define the spaces that support your style of teaching. Create a meeting area where the students can sit comfortably, share ideas, have class discussions, and learn lessons that you model. This area can also be used when you organize your students into small groups or conduct workshop sessions. This is the primary teaching area and should have tools and materials for you to chart, read, explain, demonstrate, and model. Students can bring notebooks and pencils to the area and learn note-taking skills.
- Table and desk arrangement is based on the available furniture, the sizes and shapes of the desks/tables, and the size/ height of the students. At any time in the school year, it may be necessary to pull the room apart and start anew, therefore it is best to have a movable situation so that there can be conversational groupings and rearrangement for testing times.
- Every room should be print-rich. Books can be displayed and labeled in colorful bins that are organized by author, subject area, reading level, gender preference, genre, fiction, and non-fiction. Bins should be portable and not overstuffed. Students are more apt to select books that are given special attention and are displayed respectfully.
- Involve students in the process: when they know how to use materials, where to store them, and when to use them, they become invested in the classroom. A lot of time is saved when materials are organized so that everyone in the room knows where they are and how they are used.
- Charts and student work displays are the best evidence of teaching and learning. Display these throughout the classroom and during the entire year. The process of learning is as important as the end product.

Classrooms are living, breathing, changing environments. We need to constantly assess and reassess our purposes, reasoning and goals. When you are aware of the path, the students usually follow and everyone learns something in the process.

Miller, Debbie, ***Teaching with Intention, Defining Beliefs, Aligning Practice, Taking Action***, Stenhouse, Portland, Maine, 2008.

http://www.teachersnetwork.org/ntol/howto/adjust/learn_envir.htm

Effective Instructional Strategies

by **Sharon Longert**

Students need to have a focus to be successful learners. It is the teacher who guides the student to have a focus. To focus a student to a particular task, skill, or strategy the teacher needs to fully explain the task, skill, or strategy. Students don't retain much information when they are told; they need scaffolds and supports to process information. As teachers we need to….." ask ourselves whether we are explaining or telling." (Fisher and Frey, 2008)

Students need to be aware of the thinking process of the teacher. The mini-lesson/lecture in the middle and the high school classroom should contain new terms and concepts and allow students to draw conclusions from the ideas otherwise they could read the information in a book. Before the students are focused, they need to understand the purpose for the lesson. At this time the teacher connects the previously learned information to the reason for the new information; reminds students of correlated written and social skills and presents a synopsis of what the students will be doing. Two methods of focusing are modeling and demonstration. Modeling emphasizes how a task, skill, or strategy is accomplished. Demonstration uses a combination of verbal and visual elements to accomplish a task, skill, or strategy.

Modeling

- Name the particular task, skill, or strategy: "Today we will learn how to solve equations."
- State the purpose of the task, skill, or strategy: "When you work with a variable, you will need to solve equations."
- Explain when the skill or strategy is used: "When you want to complete a number sentence with an unknown variable, you will be solving an equation."
- Use analogies to link their prior knowledge to the new skill: "When you work with word problems, you often have to find unknown numbers by using the information that is given."
- Demonstrate how the task, skill, or strategy is completed: "When you add/subtract the same number from both sides of the equation, you can find the variable."
- Alert the learners about errors to avoid: "Make sure to add/subtract the same number form BOTH sides of the equation."
- Access the use of the skill: "Now we will work on another equation together and review the steps."

When the skill or strategy is modeled, not just told they gain a deeper understanding for when to apply it, what to watch for and how to assess their own success.

Demonstration

- Name all of the materials and explain their purpose in completion the final project.
- Show the steps in "real time."

- Give alternative steps to the process ("there is more than one way to ……").
- Discuss the possible errors by using a shortcut.

The demonstration includes the sequence of steps and the decisions that accompany each steps so the next step makes sense. Errors to avoid are also noted to accomplish the task, skill or strategy.

After modeling and demonstrating the skill or strategy students can be led to know how and when to use their new skills. They can self-assess and evaluate the approaches they use to connect the learning to the next new skill that they learn. They can begin to travel on the road to self-directed learning.

Fisher, D., Frey, N., *Better Learning Through Structured Learning: A Framework for the Gradual Release of Responsibility*, ASCD, 2008.

http://www.teachersnetwork.org/ntol/howto/adjust/effective.htm

Reinforcing Difficult Concepts

Benna Golubtchik

Sometimes it is necessary to teach a concept that is difficult for students to grasp, but that you know is essential for them to learn. Academic anchoring, or cueing, works well for such concepts.

One reason that students may find a concept difficult to understand is that they have no prior association with the concept. If we are teaching sequentially, or part to whole, using small, logical steps, students might miss the main idea. By introducing a global association, students may make the connection more easily. They can visualize the goal, even if they don't yet understand it.

It is wise to increase the use of the senses. Stimulate the visual by use of size, color, shape, and distance. Increase the auditory by introducing volume, pause, pitch, sounds, and voices. Introduce kinesthetics by using texture, temperature, movement, weights. Get the students involved in as many ways as you can. Find a way for students to demonstrate that they, in fact, understand what they have learned.

Here is an example of how I helped reinforce students' understanding of the states of matter (solid, liquid, and gas). I formed three groups. Each group had to work together to demonstrate their state. The others had to guess which concept they were demonstrating. The solid group stood closely together, hands at sides, and moved slowly in a formation. The liquids chose to "flow" by moving along the floor in waves. The gaseous group became molecules that floated throughout the room, taking up the volume of their container. By involving the kinesthetic with the visual, the demonstrations remained with the students.

In math, students often have a difficult time understanding which zeroes are necessary or unnecessary when working with decimal points. A teacher hung up paper numbers on the board, placing a decimal point in the middle. After the teacher's explanation, the students identified that the outermost zeroes on either side of the decimal point were unnecessary. The teacher then had students remove each unnecessary zero. She took scissors and excitedly cut up each unnecessary "0" and threw it into a garbage can. As these students encounter additional problems focusing on the necessity of zeroes, their blackboard experience will help them recall the rules.

At any age, our students can benefit from our creativity if we give them some association to help them recall new and difficult information. Be creative, and by all means, share your ideas with our readers.

http://www.teachersnetwork.org/ntol/howto/adjust/c15983,.htm

Atlanta Homeschooling Examiner

Andrea Hermitt

According to the rantings of many an education expert, I am not qualified to homeschool my kids.

I ranked #20 in my class of 200 students in high school. I got a paralegal degree 3 years later. Two years after that I finished college with a BA in Fine Arts with an English Minor. I may be qualified to assist a lawer, oversee evictions for a real-estate firm, process credit applications for a furniture company, decorate houses, and paint murals, all of which I have done, but to homeschool a child... where are my qualifications?

How can someone who nearly failed trigonometry teach higher math? How could someone whose teachers babied her through Chemistry allowing her to draw elements when she couldn't name them, teach higher science? How could a person who never took honors classes, or never took a higher math or science in college, not to mention education classes teach a child?

As homeschoolers, we tend to brush off these questions, but you have to admit that they have a point. Still, the anwer is quite simple. There are 3 basic reasons that I am qualified to teach my children.

1. I have intimate information about my children. I understand their strengths, their weaknesses, and their motivations. I know how to get them interested in a subject, and don't have to spend the first quarter of each school year trying to connect with my students. I am connected to them.

2. I have the ability to learn. When fueled with proper motivation, the desire to teach my kids, it doesn't take alot of effort to brush up on a subject I have forgotten, or to learn something new. Right now, I am teaching myself Spanish along with my kids, so that they have someone to practice with on a daily basis. Estoy aprendiendo español!

3. I know where and how to find help. Like I wrote earlier, I nearly bombed Trig, and struggled through Chemistry, that makes Caluculus and Physics a bit of a stretch. However, as I am connected to many other homeschoolers, and even have educators in my circle of family and friends, I have resources of people who can teach my kids when I can't. There are even local classes they can take to learn what I don't feel capable of teaching.

So before you worry that you are not qualified to teach your own child, sit down and think about these points. Ask yourself, do I know my child well enough to inspire him or her to learn? Am I capable of learning a subject in order to help my child through it? Am I capable of knowing when I need help and finding it? If you can answer yes to these questions, then you are qualified to homeschool... and so am I.

Notes from a homeschooling mom: Taking high school one subject at a time.

I recently realized that we could and probably should apply this technique to homeschooling. My son took Spanish 1 last year in a classroom setting, but because he was trying to balance that class with Geometry, History, and Science, and Language Arts, did not do as well as he hoped. Therefore this summer we are reviewing spanish 1 by itself (with the help of an online program) and also getting started on Spanish 2.

In fact, with the exception of Algebra two which he will work on every day during next school year, he plans to take his academic classes one class at a time. We have split the year into 5 semesters. Semester 1 will be dedicated to finishing spanish 2. Semester 2 we will cover

literature. Semester 3 we will cover history. Semester 4 we will cover science, and semester 5 we will dedicate to studying for a CLEP exam for Algebra. Actually, each semester will be followed by a CLEP exam. Find out more about CLEP exams here.

This kind of schedule may not work for all homeschoolers, but last summer my son finished Algebra 1 after moving very slowly through the course during the school year, and he got 100 percent on all of the tests. He really liked the way he was able to hyperfocus on the one subject, and wanted to give that a try for this school year. My other child will follow a more traditinal schedule for now as her interests are in the arts, academics for her are just something she has to do. Fortunately, she is pretty good at it.

http://www.examiner.com/x-2626-Atlanta-Homeschooling-Examiner

Choosing Curriculum

Homeschooling Curriculum

The number one question most homeschoolers ask is, "What homeschooling curriculum do you use?"

Choosing a homeschool curriculum can be the most difficult decision next to deciding to homeschool. Here are some steps for finding the best home school curriculum for your child.

What are Your Family's Needs and Goals?

Before looking at home school products, evaluate your family in the following areas.

Family Size - How large is your family? How many school-age children will you teach? How close in age are your children? Do you have preschoolers, toddlers and babies to care for? Do you have older children who can help you attend to your little ones?

Family Structure - Do you plan on working and homeschooling? Does your spouse work long hours or travel for a living? Does your spouse have a flexible schedule? Do you live near extended family members?

Lifestyle - What happens on a typical day in your home? Do you have a carefully planned schedule or do you make plans at the last minute? Does your family prefer staying at home or staying active in the community? What challenges do encounter on a regular basis? Describe your ideal day.

Goals - Why are you homeschooling? What do you want your children to be like as adults? What do you want to teach your children? Rank your goals for your children in order of importance in the areas of religion, character, academics and life-skills.

What Type of Home School Curriculum do You Need?

Next, consider your preferred homeschooling method and your child's learning style. Answer the following questions to help you determine what type of homeschooling curriculum to use:

- **What subjects will you teach your child?**
- **Do you want a program that is secular or religious?**
- **Are you willing to use different curriculum providers for different subjects or do you want to purchase from one supplier?**
- **Will you keep records and grades?**
- **Do you want a program with pre-planned lessons and a set schedule?**
- **Do you want a program that promotes independent study or one that relies on parent interaction?**
- **How much time do you have available to spend on formal lessons?**

- **Do you need to combine children of different ages into one program?**
- **Will your program need to address learning difficulties or cater to a specific learning style?**
- **Does your preferred program include worksheets, tests, hands-on projects or activities?**

Finding a Homeschool Curriculum

Once you've determined your preferences, ask for homeschool curriculum recommendations in online homeschool forums and from friends in your home school support group. You can also find suggestions in books written by authors who share your home school philosophy.

When considering these suggestions, remember they're not facts, they're opinions. Make a decision based on what's right for your family. Here are some tips for choosing a:

- **homeschool reading curriculum,**
- **homeschool math curriculum,**
- **homeschool writing curriculum,**
- **homeschool science curriculum,**
- **homeschool history curriculum, and**
- **homeschool art curriculum.**

You don't have to be an expert to successfully educate your child. There are numerous ways to teach using everyday activities. Here are some tips for teaching:

- **homeschool reading,**
- **homeschool writing,**
- **homeschooling math,**
- **homeschool science,**
- **homeschooling history, and**
- **homeschool physical education.**

If you are looking for a nonreligious program, view these tips for finding a secular home school curriculum.

If your children will undergo homeschool testing, you may want to purchase a test prep curriculum. Here are some helpful test-taking tips.

Purchasing a Homeschooling Curriculum

Before making your final selection, read product reviews about the programs you are considering. Here's my collection of over 400 homeschool curriculum reviews that were written by experienced homeschoolers.

You may also want to attend a home school curriculum fair so you can view the products in person. Some vendors offer show discounts or eliminate shipping costs when you purchase materials at a vendor fair. Here are some other tips for affordable homeschooling.

Be prepared for the highs and lows that come with purchasing homeschooling curriculum. You will likely feel anticipation as your materials are shipped, followed by the excitement of receiving the products, and regret upon hearing about new and better products your friends are using.

It is perfectly normal to feel buyer's remorse after purchasing homeschool curriculum. However, remember why you chose the program and go ahead and use it. If your family is miserable after you've had ample time to get used to the program, make adjustments or start looking for an alternative.

Don't overwhelm yourself with multiple programs in order to make sure you've covered everything. Even the best homeschooling curriculum will leave gaps. If you help your children master reading, writing and arithmetic, they will be able to learn anything they need to know. Relax, and enjoy the journey!

http://www.successful-homeschooling.com/homeschooling-curriculum.html

The Nature of Traditional Curriculum

Excerpt by Marilyn Howshall

Many parents limit their children's education to basic academics along the lines of standard curriculum. This is only a small part of what true education consists of. The deception about curriculums lies in the assumption that they contain the body of knowledge our children need to succeed as functioning members on society and the church.

While standard curriculums contain a certain amount of information and facts, they fall short of many of the most important truths for the shaping of a biblical and godly world-view, and thus the character and wisdom of the child. Add to this the void of experience and skill which are co-equally valid and necessary elements of a quality education. Let me show you what I mean.

Let us for a moment consider in what we are attempting to educate our children. The definition of "learning" as found in Noah Webster's 1828 dictionary is this:

Learning, n 1. The knowledge of principles or facts received by instruction or study; acquired knowledge or ideas in any branch of science or literature. 2. Knowledge acquired by experience, experiment or observation. 3. Skill in anything good or bad.

Based upon the definition, let us take a closer look at the three means by which we learn.

1. through instruction and study (of principles or facts)

2. through experience, experiment or observation

3. through developing skill in something

As I stated earlier, all three means of learning are coequally valid and necessary elements in the education of an individual and should have equal emphasis as well. However, the emphasis of traditional curriculum, even those with a Christian label, is in the area of instruction in facts and even then the facts are usually unconnected and irrelevantly taught.

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

The Sciences

ASTRONOMY

: *the study of objects and matter outside the earth's atmosphere and of their physical and chemical properties*

The scientific study of celestial objects (such as stars, planets, comets, and galaxies) and phenomena that originate outside the Earth's atmosphere (such as the cosmic background radiation). It is concerned with the evolution, physics, chemistry, meteorology, and motion of celestial objects, as well as the formation and development of the universe

- Books about Space, Space Travel and celestial objects.

METEOROLOGY

Scientific study of atmospheric phenomena, particularly of the troposphere and lower stratosphere Meteorology entails the systematic study of weather and its causes, and provides the basis for weather forecasting. See also climatology.

Concepts: Weather, Atmospheric Changes, Seasons & Calendar, Clouds, Water Cycle, Air Pressure, etc.

GEOLOGY

: *a science that deals with the history of the earth and its life especially as recorded in rocks*
: *a study of the solid matter of a celestial body (as the moon)*
Basic Concepts: rocks, soil, and gemstones, geology studies the composition, structure, physical properties, history, and the processes that shape Earth's components

- Books that deal solely with the physical properties of Earth

PALEONTOLOGY

the study of prehistoric life forms on Earth through the examination of plant and animal fossils. This includes the study of body fossils, tracks (ichnites), burrows, cast-off parts, fossilised faeces (coprolites), palynomorphs and chemical residues. Studies of prehistoric hominins, their culture and their behaviour are the purview of two other disciplines, archaeology and paleoanthropology.

Basic Concepts: Prehistoric life, dinosaurs, fossils

- Books about Dinosaurs, Fossils, Prehistoric

OCEANOGRAPHY

Study of the Earth's oceans and seas. Covering a wide range of topics: marine organisms and ecosystem dynamics; ocean currents, waves, and geophysical fluid dynamics; plate tectonics and the geology of the sea floor; and fluxes of various chemical substances and physical properties within the ocean and across its boundaries.

Concepts:
• Biological oceanography, or marine biology, is the study of the plants, animals and microbes (biota) of the oceans and their ecological interaction;

• Chemical oceanography, or marine chemistry, is the study of the chemistry of the ocean and its chemical interaction with the atmosphere;

• Geological oceanography, or marine geology, is the study of the geology of the ocean floor including plate tectonics;

• Physical oceanography, or marine physics, studies the ocean's physical attributes including temperature-salinity structure, mixing, waves, internal waves, tides and currents. Of particular interest is the behavior of sound (acoustical oceanography), light (optical oceanography) and radio waves in the ocean.
- Books that deal with *any* study of the oceans, seas and large bodies of water on the planet Earth.

CHEMISTRY

: *a science that deals with the composition, structure, and properties of substances and with the transformations that they undergo*
Basic Concepts: Atom, Element, Compound, Substance, Molecule, Mole, Ions and salts, Phase, Chemical bond, Chemical reaction, Energy, and Chemical laws

- Books that deal solely with the basic concepts listed above.

PHYSICS & OPTICS

1: a science that deals with matter and energy and their interactions
2 a: the physical processes and phenomena of a particular system b: the physical properties and composition of something

Basic Concepts: force, energy, mass, and charge

- Books that deal solely with the basic concepts listed above.

TECHNOLOGY

: *the technology involving the development, maintenance, and use of computer systems, software, and networks for the processing and distribution of data*

- Books that deal solely with the field of study defined above.

SCIENTISTS & INVENTORS

People in the past and present which make significant contributions to any of the fields of science.

- Biographies and Autobiographies in all fields of scientific study.
**books will also be listed under each field of science as well*

HUMAN ANATOMY

Anatomy is subdivided into gross anatomy and microscopic anatomy.

Gross anatomy (also called topographical anatomy, regional anatomy, or anthropotomy) is the study of anatomical structures that can be seen by unaided vision.

Microscopic anatomy is the study of minute anatomical structures assisted with microscopes, which includes histology (the study of the organization of tissues), and cytology (the study of cells).

Anatomy, physiology (the study of function) and biochemistry (the study of the chemistry of living structures) are complementary basic medical sciences where are typically studied in tandem.

Basic Concepts: The human body consists of biological systems, that consist of organs, that consist of tissues, that consist of cells and connective tissue.

- Books that deal with the human body and biology in all aspects.

ECOLOGY

1: a branch of science concerned with the interrelationship of organisms and their environments
2: the totality or pattern of relations between organisms and their environment

Ecosystems: This classification is used to define the Global 200 list of ecoregions identified by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) as priorities for conservation.

This classification gives the following terrestrial biomes :

- Tundra (arctic, humid)
- Boreal forests/taiga (subarctic, humid)
- Temperate coniferous forests (temperate cold, humid to semi-humid)
- Temperate broadleaf and mixed forests (temperate, humid)
- Temperate grasslands, savannas, and shrublands (temperate, semi-arid)
- Mediterranean forests, woodlands, and shrub (temperate warm, semi-humid to semi-arid with winter rainfall)
- Tropical and subtropical coniferous forests (tropical and subtropical, semi-humid)
- Tropical and subtropical moist broadleaf forests (tropical and subtropical, humid)
- Tropical and subtropical dry broadleaf forests (tropical and subtropical, semi-humid)
- Tropical and subtropical grasslands, savannas, and shrublands (tropical and subtropical, semi-arid)
- Deserts and xeric shrublands (temperate to tropical, arid)
- Mangrove (subtropical and tropical, salt and brackish water inundated)
  Flooded grasslands and savannas (temperate to tropical, fresh water inundated)
- Montane grasslands and shrublands (temperate to tropical, high altitude)

However, for our purposes we will arrange the ecosystems this way for our studies K-4:

A. Grassland

1. Savanna
2. Prairie
3. Alpine (Mountain)

B. Desert

1. Coastal Desert
2. Semi-Arrid Desert
3. Hot & Dry Desert

C. Tropical Forest

1. Rain Forest
2. Sub-tropical areas

D. Forests & Woodlands

E. Aquatic

1. Freshwater
2. Ocean: Coral, Deep Sea
3. Wetlands, Rivers and Marsh
4. Arctic, Antarctic (Polar)

- **Books that deal with habitats/ecosystems, environmental issues and endangered animals.**

ZOOLOGY

1: a branch of biology concerned with the classification and the properties and vital phenomena of animals
2 a: animal life (as of a region) : fauna b: the properties and vital phenomena exhibited by an animal, animal type, or group

A. Taxonomy: orderly classification of plants and animals according to their presumed natural relationships
**This may change as I learn more but here's the structure I currently have and I do not claim this to be 100% accurate or finished.*

VERTEBRATES

KINGDOM MAMMALIA - MAMMALS
-Monotremes - platypus
-Marsupial - kangaroos, koala
-Insectivores - moles, hedgehogs
-Chiroptera - bats
-Primates - monkeys, apes
-Endentata - anteaters, sloths, armadillos
-Rodents - rats, mice, muskrats, voles, hamsters, guinea pigs, chincillas
-Carnivora
A. Dogs (wolves, foxes)
B. Bears
C. Racoons
D. Weasels, Otters, Skunks, Badgers
E. Hyena
F. Cats (Tiger, Mountain Lion, Puma, Cheetah)
-Proboscidae - elephants
-Perissodactyla
A. Horses
B. Zebras
C. Donkeys
D. Tapis
E. Rhinoceroses
-Artiodactyla
A. Pigs
B. Hippopatumus
C. Camels
D. Deer
E. Giraffes
F. Cattle, Sheep, Goats
G. Antelopes
-Pinnipeds

A. Walrus, Seal, Whales, Dolphins, Manatees
Microorganisms, Fungi, etc.

FISH
AMPHIBIANS
REPTILES
BIRDS

- Books the singly deal with these topics or groups

INVERTEBRATES

PORIFERA- SPONGES
CNIDARIA -corals, jellyfish, hydra and sea anemones
ENCHINODERMS -Sea stars, sand dollars
WORMS
MOLLUSKS
ARTHROPODS
- Pillbugs, Centipedes, Scorpions
- Spiders
- Insects
A. General Insects
B. Butterflies & Moths
C. Bees & Wasps
D. Ants
E. Cockroaches, Grasshoppers, Crickets
F. Beetles
G. Flies, Termites, Dragonflies

- Books the singly deal with these topics or groups
B. Traits and Behaviors: biological clock, dominance, estivation, growth, hibernation, instinct, metamorphosis, migration, mimicry, pheromone, camouflage, reproduction, sleep, sound, and territorial behavior
- Books the singly deal with these topics

BOTANY
1: a branch of biology dealing with plant life
2 a: plant life b: the properties and life phenomena exhibited by a plant, plant type, or plant group

Botany covers a wide range of scientific disciplines that study plants, algae, and fungi including: structure, growth, reproduction, metabolism, development, diseases, and chemical properties and evolutionary relationships between the different groups. The study of plants and botany began with tribal lore, used to identify edible, medicinal and poisonous plants, making botany one of the oldest sciences.

I. Botanic Taxonomy

A. NONVASCULAR
Lack xylem and phloem tissues that carry water and food from one part of the plant body to another

1. BRYOPHYTA
Liverworts, hornworts, mosses
A. Hepaticae: Liverworts
B. Anthocerotae: Hornworts
C. Musci: Moses

B. VASCULAR

A. Psilophyta: whisk ferns or fork ferns
B. Lycophyta: Club mosses, quillworts, selaginellas
C. Sphenophyta: horsetails
D. Pterophyta: ferns
E. Coniferophyta: conifers, evergreen trees or shrubs
F. Cycadophyta: Cycads, fernlike leave and large seed cones
G. Ginkgophyta: Ginkgoes
H. Gnetophyta: found in deserts and tropical forest, seeds not in cones, leaves called bracts
I. Anthophyta: Flowering plants, angiosperms (two types of angiosperms: Monocotyledonae and Dicotyledonae
1. Monocotyledonae: One cotyledon
2. Dicotyledonae: Two cotyledons

II. Parts of plants: bark, bud, bulb, catkin, cell, cellulose, chlorophyll, chloroplast, corm, cotyledon, drupe, flower, fruit, grain, inflorescence, leaf, lenticel, nut, raceme, rhizome, root, sap, seed, spore, stem, thorn, tuber, wood

III. Kinds of Plants: angiosperm, annual, biennial, bryophyte, carnivorous plant, conifer, dicotyledon, epiphyte, fern, flower, grass, gymnosperm, herb, hornwort, legume, liverwort, monocotyledon, moss, perennial, poisonous plant, pteridophyte, shrub, succulent, tree, vegetable, vine, water plant, weed

IV. Plant Products: Alcohol, Charcoal, Cork, Drug(s), Dye, Fiber, Food, Forest Products, Gutta-percha, Lumber, Paper, Perfume, Resin, Rosin, Rubber, Tar and Turpentine

V. Plant Growing: Agriculture, Alternation of generations, Auxin, Bonsai, Breeding, Farm & Farming, Fertilizer, Gardening, Germination, Grafting, Greenhouse, Herbarium, Hybrid, Hydroponic, Insecticide, Nursery, Photoperiodism, Photosynthesis, Pollen, Pruning, Reproduction, Soil, Terrarium, Transplanting

VI. Where Plants Live: Bog, Desert, Forest, Grassland, Pampa, Plain, Pond, Prairie, Savanna, Seashore, Steppe, Tropical Rain Forest, Tundra, Wetland

VII. Crops
VIII. Garden Flowers
IX. Wild Flowers
X. Herbs

XI. Vegetables
XII. Shrubs
XIII. Trees

Physics Resources Mega List

Here's a mega-list of grade 2-5 physics books, videos, kits for physics topics. Hope it helps! Warmest regards, Lori D.

MOTION
Forces, momentum, friction, gravity, work, etc.

Books:
- Magic School Bus: Gains Weight (gravity)
- Magic School Bus: Goes On Air (air pressure)
- Magic School Bus: Plays Ball (forces, friction)
- Magic School Bus: Liz on the Move (forces)
- Let's Read and Find Out About Science: Forces Make Things Move (forces)

Videos:
- Magic School Bus: Gains Weight (gravity)
- Magic School Bus: Goes On Air (air pressure)
- Magic School Bus: Plays Ball (forces, friction)
- Bill Nye the Science Guy: Gravity
- Bill Nye the Science Guy: Balance
- Bill Nye the Science Guy: Momentum
- Bill Nye the Science Guy: Pressure
- Bill Nye the Science Guy: Friction
- Bill Nye the Science Guy: Motion
- Schlessenger Media series: The Way Things Work: Friction
- Schlessenger Media series: The Way Things Work: Pressure

Kits:
- Science Wiz: Motion (kit) -- gr. 2-8

HEAT/ENERGY
Heat, temperature/thermometer, convection/conduction/radiation, energy, etc.

Books:
- Magic School Bus: In the Arctic (heat)
- Let's Read and Find Out About Science: Energy Makes Things Happen (energy)

Videos:
- Magic School Bus: In the Arctic (heat) -- grade 1-5
- Bill Nye the Science Guy: Heat
- Bill Nye the Science Guy: Energy
- Schlessenger Media series: The Way Things Work: Heat

Kits:
- Science in a Nutshell: Energy & Motion (gr. 3-6)

LIGHT/OPTICS/SOUND
Electromagnetic spectrum, visible light, reflection/refraction, lens, optical illusions...

Books:
- Magic School Bus: Makes a Rainbow (color)
- Magic School Bus: Liz Makes a Rainbow (color)
- Magic School Bus: Gets a Bright Idea (light)
- Magic School Bus: In The Haunted House (sound)
- Usborne Science With Light and Mirrors

Videos:
- Magic School Bus: Makes a Rainbow (color) -- grade 1-5
- Magic School Bus: Gets a Bright Idea (light) -- grade 1-5
- Magic School Bus: In The Haunted House (sound) -- grade 1-5
- Bill Nye the Science Guy: Sound
- Bill Nye the Science Guy: Light and Color
- Bill Nye the Science Guy: Light Optics, Bending, and Bouncing
- Schlessenger Media series: The Way Things Work: Light
- Schlessenger Media series: The Way Things Work: Photography (light, lenses)
- Schlessenger Media series: The Way Things Work: Sound

Kits:
- Light and Color (book and kit) -- by Millson -- gr. 2-4
- Science with Light and Mirrors (book and kit) -- by Usborne -- gr. 1-5
- Science in a Nutshell: Sound Vibrations (gr. 2-6)

ELECTRICITY/MAGNETISM
Charges, conductors, current, magnetic fields, poles, etc.

Books:
- Magic School Bus: Gets Charged (electricity)
- Magic School Bus and the Electric Field Trip (electricity)
- Let's Read and Find Out About Science: Switch On, Switch Off (electricity)
- Let's Read and Find Out About Science: What Makes a Magnet (magnetism)
- Usborne Science with Magnets
- Lightning: It's Electrifying (All Aboard Reading - step 3) -- Jennifer Dussling

Videos:
- Magic School Bus: Gets Charged (electricity) -- grade 1-5
- Bill Nye the Science Guy: Electricity
- Bill Nye the Science Guy: Static Electricity
- Bill Nye the Science Guy: Magnetism
- Schlessenger Media series: The Way Things Work: Electricity
- Schlessenger Media series: The Way Things Work: Magnets

Kits:
- Science with Magnets (book and kit) -- gr. 1-5

- Adventures in Science: Electricity (kit) -- gr. 3-8
- Science in a Nutshell: Magnet Magic (gr. 3-6)
- Science in a Nutshell: Electricity & Magnetism Cluster (gr. 3-6)
- Science in a Nutshell: Electromagnetism (gr. 3-6)
- Adventures in Electricity kit (gr. 3-8)
- Science in a Nutshell: Charge It! Static Electricity (gr. 4-6)
- Science in a Nutshell: Electrical Connections (gr. 4-6)
- TOPS #32 Electricity (gr. 3-8)
- TOPS # Magnets (gr. 3-8)
- Snap Circuits

SIMPLE MACHINES
Inclined plane, lever, pulley, screw, wedge, gears, etc.

Books:
- The Way Things Work (David MacCauley) (gr 4+)

Videos:
- Bill Nye the Science Guy: Simple Machines
- Schlessenger Media series: The Way Things Work: Belts and Gears
- Schlessenger Media series: The Way Things Work: Inclined Planes
- Schlessenger Media series: The Way Things Work: Levers
- Schlessenger Media series: The Way Things Work: Pulleys
- Schlessenger Media series: The Way Things Work: Screws
- Schlessenger Media series: The Way Things Work: Springs
- Schlessenger Media series: The Way Things Work: Wheels and Axels

Kits:
- Gears and Pulleys kit (Museum of Science and Industry)
- Science in a Nutshell: Simple Machines Cluster (gr. 2-6)
- Science in a Nutshell: Clever Levers (gr. 4-6)
- Science in a Nutshell: Pulley Power (gr. 4-6)
- Science in a Nutshell: Wheels at Work (gr. 4-6)

FLIGHT/ROCKETRY

Books:
- Magic School Bus: Takes Flight (flight)
- Magic School Bus: Liz Takes Flight (flight)
- No-Sweat Science Space and Flight Experiments (flight, rockets)

Videos:
- Magic School Bus: Takes Flight (flight) -- grade 1-5
- Bill Nye the Science Guy: Flight
- Schlessenger Media series: The Way Things Work: Flight

Kits:
- Magic School Bus: Soaring into Flight (book and kit) -- gr. 1-5
- Science in a Nutshell: Gliders to Jets (gr. 4-6)

WATER PHYSICS
Floating, sinking, pressure, buoyance, adhesion/cohesion, etc.

books:
- Magic School Bus: Ups and Downs (buoyancy)
- Water (All Aboard Reading - step 1) -- Emily Neye

videos:
- Magic School Bus: Ups and Downs (buoyancy) -- grade 1-5
- Bill Nye the Science Guy: Bouyancy
- Schlessenger Media series: The Way Things Work: Floating
- Schlessenger Media series: The Way Things Work: Sinking

kits:
- Science in a Nutshell: Water Physics (gr. 4-6)
- TOPS #200 Pressure/Buoyancy (gr. K-12)

MACHINES / STRUCTURES

Books:
- Magic School Bus: Under Construction (structures)
- Magic School Bus: Gets Programmed (computers)
- Magic School Bus: Revving Up (engines)
- Amazing Buildings (DK Reader - step 2) -- Kate Hayden
- Really Big Things (DK Reader - step 3) -- Michael Teitelbaum
- The New Way Things Work -- David MacCauley (for grades 4/5+)
- Submarines (Step Into Reading 4) -- Sydelle Kramer
- Extreme Machines (Eyewitness Reader 4) -- Christopher Maynard
- Really Big Things (DK Reader 3) -- Michael Teitelbaum

Videos:
- Magic School Bus: Under Construction (structures) -- grade 1-5
- Magic School Bus: Gets Programmed (computers) -- grade 1-5
- Magic School Bus: Revving Up (engines) -- grade 1-5
- Bill Nye the Science Guy: Structures
- Bill Nye the Science Guy: Inventing
- Bill Nye the Science Guy: Computers
- Schlessenger Media series: The Way Things Work: Engines
- Schlessenger Media series: The Way Things Work: Pumps
- Schlessenger Media series: The Way Things Work: Sensors
- Schlessenger Media series: The Way Things Work: Steam Power
- Schlessenger Media series: The Way Things Work: Telecommunications
- Building Big series (dome, skyscraper, bridge, dam, tunnel) -- grade 4+
(companion website: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/buildingbig/)

Chemistry Resources Mega List

Below, I reprinted my list of chemistry resources for K-3rd graders. Also below is the link to that thread in which I responded with that list; there were lots of other great suggestions by other ladies in that thread as well. Hope that helps! Warmest regards, Lori D.

Did Your 3rd Grader Enjoy Chemistry?
http://www.welltrainedmind.com/forum...ad.php?t=44999

WEBSITES:

- Magic School Bus (info, games, activities, printables): http://www.scholastic.com/magicschoolbus/
- Chem 4 Kids (gr. 4+ detailed text/images on chemistry topics): http://www.chem4kids.com/)
- Kids Online Resource (list of chemistry websites): http://www.kidsolr.com/science/page11.html

BOOKS (info on chemistry topics)

- What Is The World Made Of: All About Solids, Liquids and Gases (Zoehfeld)
(a Let's Read and Find Out About Science, stage 2, book) -- gr. K-3
- Rookie Read About Science: Solids, Liquids and Gases (Garrett)
- Rookie Read About Science: What Is Matter (Curry)
- It's Science: Solid, Liquid, Gas (Hewitt)
- Primary Physical Science: Touch It: Materials, Matter and You (Mason) -- gr. K-2
- Primary Physical Science: Change It: Liquids, Solids, Gases & You (Mason) -- gr. K-2
- What's the Matter in Mr. Whiskers' Room (Ross) -- gr. K-3
- Magic School Bus: Gets Baked in a Cake (kitchen chemistry) -- gr. 1-5
- Science Stories & Experiments: "Enchanted Forest" (Kitchen Chemistry 1) (McChesney)
- Chemicals in Action: Acids and Bases (Oxlade) -- gr. 3-6
- Let's Wonder About Science: Acids and Bases (Patten)
- Material Matters: Acids and Bases (Baldwin) -- gr. 3-6
- The Periodic Table: Elements with Style (Dingle)
- World of Chemistry (John Tiner) -- gr. 4-6
- DK Eyewitness Books: Chemistry (Newmark/Buller) -- 5-8

BOOKS (with chemistry experiments)

- Adventures with Atoms and Molecules -- 5 book series (Mebane)
- Usborne Science Activities: Science in the Kitchen (Meredith) -- gr. 1-4
- Usborne Book of Science Experiments (Bingham) -- gr. 3-6
- Usborne 100 Science Experiments (Andrews) -- gr. 3-6
- Cool Chemistry Concoctions: 50 Formulas That Fizz, Foam, Splatter & Ooze (Rhatigan) -- gr. 3-6
- No Sweat Science: Chemistry Experiments (Loeschnig) -- gr. 3-6
- Fizz, Bubble & Flash: Element Explorations & Atom Adventures (Brandolini) -- gr. 4-8
- Science Experiments You Can Eat (Cobb) -- gr. 4-8 -- a good kitchen chemistry book

- Janice Van Cleave's Chemistry for Every Kid: 101 Easy Experiments (Van Cleave) -- gr. 4-8

GENERAL RESOURCES (with chemistry text and experiments)

- 175 More Science Experiments to Amuse and Amaze Your Friends (Cash/Parker/Taylor)
gr. 3-6 -- one of the 4 sections is on chemistry, short but worthwhile, text and experiments

Dempsey-Parr Science Encyclopedia -- gr. 3-6
Has a very nice section on chemistry; 2-page spreads on 15 different chemistry topics and then 6 chemistry experiments in the back

CURRICULAE (based on chemistry)

- The Elements: Ingredients of the Universe (McHenry) -- gr. 4-8 (at Rainbow Resource)
- God's Design for Chemistry: Properties of Atoms & Molecules -- gr. 3-7 (at Rainbow Resource)
- God's Design for Chemistry: Properties of Matter -- gr. 3-7 (at Rainbow Resource)
- Simple Chemistry (Evan-Moor) -- gr. 4-6
- Christian Kids Explore: Chemistry (Ridlon) -- gr. 3-5

VIDEOS (based on chemistry)

- Magic School Bus: Ready Set Dough (kitchen chemistry) -- gr. 1-5
- Magic School Bus: In A Pickle (microbes / biological chemistry) -- gr. 1-5
- Magic School Bus: Gets Planted (photosynthesis / biological chemistry) -- gr. 1-5
- Magic School Bus: Meets Molly Cule (molecules) -- gr. 1-5
- Kitchen Chemistry Science Interactive DVD ($23) -- gr. K-8

- Schlessinger Media DVDs: Physical Science For Children series -- gr. K-4
http://www.libraryvideo.com/ssl/phys...P2VR9HPMAG9GT3
** All About Solids, Liquids & Gases
** All About Properties of Matter

- Bill Nye The Science Guy -- gr. 3-6:
** Phases of Matter
** Chemical Reactions
** Do It Yourself Science
** Atoms and Molecules
** Fluids

KITS (based on chemistry)

- Bubble Builder ($25) -- gr. 3-12
- Bubbleology ($14) -- gr. 1-6
- My First Chemistry Kit ($17) -- gr. preK-adult

- Wild Goose 3-in-1 chemistry kits -- gr. 3-6:
** Slippery Slime Time
** Super Bounce Putty
** pH Fun

- Science in a Nutshell kits: http://www.delta-education.com/siang...ID=5&menuID=68
** Bubble Science -- gr. K-3
** Investigating Matter Cluster -- gr. 3-6
** Gases -- gr. 4-6
** Liquids -- gr. 4-6
** Physical and Chemical Changes -- gr. 4-6

Preschool Writing Skills

Here are some ways to get your child practicing his handwriting skills before he finishes preschool. With most of these, you're aiming to **strengthen his fine motor skills** – the ones that are responsible for holding and guiding a pencil along a straight line.

1. Give your child strips of paper and let her cut up into confetti. **The strips shouldn't be too thin or floppy**. Make a smiley face on the upper hole where the thumb should go, to teach her how to hold the scissor properly. Start with shorter pieces of paper that she can cut with just one snip. Progress to longer pieces which need two snips of the scissor, and so on. **Use blunt ended scissors**. After a while, move on to snipping along a line on the paper. Draw squiggly lines, straight lines, circles. Let her cut around a picture. All these **scissor cutting activities for preschoolers** help **control the movement of the scissors as it moves ahead to the next snip, and as it moves ahead to its goal**, which is great practice for writing.
2. Rip newspapers. This may seem like a boring task, but you'd be surprised at how much they enjoy it. **Terrific for fine muscular development**. Start with random ripping into small bits, then move to ripping on a line that you've drawn for her on the paper. For advanced practice, let her rip around a picture. Draw squiggly lines, and let her rip though them.
3. **Part of the problem with writing for most preschoolers comes with holding the pencil correctly**. Place a piece of sponge in her palm, and let her close her ring finger and little finger around it. Now, let her use only the thumb, forefinger and middle finger to hold the pencil. Having to hold the piece of sponge with the last two fingers will make her hold the pencil tightly with the first three. **Here's** how to do this.
4. Cut out three holes in a sock, and let her insert her thumb, forefinger and middle finger in each hole before she attempts to practice writing. Again, **this helps to reinforce the right way to hold a pencil**.
5. Give her beads, or cheerios, or pasta shapes, and some string to thread.
6. Use lacing cards, or make some of your own by punching holes in cards – use old greeting cards. Lace a thick string through.
7. Use thin crayons or chalk pieces for practice for beginners – they are easier to hold.
8. Let her connect dots on paper. Use lined handwriting paper, and make two dots that will help her make vertical, horizontal and slanting lines. Have many such lines of dots for her to connect. **This helps her draw straight lines for alphabet writing**.
9. Practice writing semi circles (like the letter "C" facing both ends). Use dots again to help her get the shape right. **This gives practice for making perfect circles and semi circles for alphabets later**.
10. Let her trace the outlines of figures and drawings with crayons.
11. Work on **developing those minute finger muscles**. Give her some play dough, and let her make small balls or sausage shapes out of them, using her thumb and forefinger only .
12. Use tweezers for sorting activities. Let her pick up a bean or a pea with a pair of tweezers, and transfer into another bowl.
13. Do **spooning activities**. Allow her to spoon dried beans from one bowl to another using her thumb, forefinger and middle finger to grasp the spoon and transfer the beans.
14. Practice inserting keys into locks or keyholes.

15. Take an old shoe box with the lid on, and make a slit on the lid. Practice inserting playing cards into the slit with her writing hand.
16. Practice writing with her fingers in shaving foam, or in a tub of sand.
17. Let her draw a picture, and sprinkle glitter inside the figure carefully, taking care to stay inside the lines as much as possible.
18. Play with rubber bands. Let her wrap rubber bands around plastic bottles or glasses – **it strengthens those very important little muscles.**

Ahhhhh, Grammar: Ten Little Rules

The class was tough. We had to give persuasive speeches. We had to learn the parts of speech. We had to *diagram sentences*. This, I thought, was surely the stupidest thing I had ever done in my 12 precocious years. I was forced to make pointless trees and lines with every part of seemingly endless sentences. It was hard. It took a lot of thinking about words. I memorized rules and hints. "... -ly is usually an *adverb*. An *adverb* describes a *verb*, while an *adjective* describes a *noun*. A, an and the are *articles*. Never end a sentence with a preposition or dangle your participles. Whatever those are."

I seriously rolled my eyes (even if only in my head) about what good all this would ever be to me. I mean, I was going to be a billionaire living in a mansion, driving a jeep, with 4 kids. I had played MASH during C lunch and already knew all this grammar would be pointless to me.

Except now I wish I could find Mrs. Curlee and tell her that of everything I ever learned in school... what she taught me that year has mattered most. True, she set the bar high. True, a whole classroom of 12-year-old kids resented her for having to really use our brains. True, I struggled and my brain hurt, and it took time away from things like tight-rolling my Guess jeans, and making sure my Benetton sweater was perfect and my crunchy, permed, blow-dried solid wings were still flawless. And true... hundreds, no thousands, of children who came through her classroom are smart, articulate and much better off for the time spent with her.

Mrs. Curlee and English teachers from sea to shining sea are fighting an uphill battle. What do 12 year olds know about what's good for them? I can't imagine how tough things are today in the world of "how r u, im gr8!" that they are forced to help children unlearn. And for every hated moment I spent learning, diagramming, and staring at disbelief at all the red pen on my papers... is matched in triplicate for every moment of silent gratitude I spend for having learned it.

Why does grammar matter?

Grammar is only a tool for communication. It is your way to make yourself be understood. So while you may think grammar is pointless, communication is surely not. Learning and then adhering to the rules of grammar is your way to facilitate comprehension. It does matter. And it may be ugly, it may be unfortunate, it may even be wrong... but you are judged everyday by the manner in which you speak and the manner in which you write. I'm not going to debate the morality of that.

People are passed over for jobs, not taken seriously in their pursuits or in our case, lose readers because of simple grammatical errors. People want the easiest path from A to B and trying to decipher what they think you might mean is not that path. We're not talking about linguistic debates here - nothing complicated, nothing controversial. I've made a list of the most common, but easy to learn, grammatical errors and how to fix them. Don't thank me, thank Mrs. Curlee! :)

1. Your vs. You're
Your is a possessive, meaning something belonging to you. It shows ownership.
Your dog, your books, your boyish good looks.

You're is a contraction. You + Are = you're. It is a subject and verb all mooshed into one.
You're hilarious! You're going to be soo glad you learned this.

To make sure you have the right one, check and see if you could say "you are" in its place in your sentence. If you can, you need "you're".

2. Their vs. They're vs. There
Their is like your. It's possessive, belonging to them.
Their house is quaint and cosy. Have you seen their dog?
To spell it properly, remember it starts like 'the'. My mom taught me that part.

They're is like you're. It's another contraction. They + Are = They're. Subject and verb again.
They're hilarious! They're going to be soooo super glad they learned grammar!

There is a place indicator. As opposed to here, it's there. It even has 'here' inside it to remind you.
Turn right over there. That's neither here nor there.

3. Its vs. It's
Surprise, surprise another possessive vs. contraction again!

Its is a possessive, belongs to it. Its does not require that cute little /'/ apostrophe mark.
Nike's swoosh mark is its distinguishing character. Its long legs help roadrunner run so fast.

It's is a contraction, It + Is = It's or It + Has = It's Subject then verb.
It's not too tricky to learn grammar. It's worth its weight in gold. It's been so long!

Again, to check yourself, try replacing 'it is' in your sentence.

4. Agree to, well... agree.

So this one isn't as clear cut as 1-3. But it simply means that if you have a plural (more than one) subject,

you need a plural verb. Likewise, if you have a single subject, you need a single verb. Subject and verb must agree.

So which is right?
There's thousands of people here! or There're thousands of people here!
There is (thousands of) **people** vs. **There are** (thousand of) **people**.

The answer is #2. There are people. So.... there're thousands of people here!

Try this one:
There's plenty of reasons to learn! or There're plenty of reasons to learn!
It's words like "thousands" and "plenty" stuck in the middle there that throw people off. Reasons and People are plural - so they need the plural verb, are.

Think about these for a moment:

"A baby is healthier if you feed them milk with DHA ."
"This message is for Handy Man. Please have them call us back at 1-800..."
"Everyone should eat their vegetables."
No. Using them and their, in those examples, is an attempt at being politically correct and avoid using his/her or him/her, and somehow offending the world by picking a gender. One baby = him. Lots of babies = them. Handy Man is definitely a him. ;) Words like everyone, anyone, every, each talk about ONE person. They are singular.
"A baby is healthier if you feed *him* milk..."
" ...please have *him* call us back..."
"eat *his* vegetables" is correct.

5. Let us vs. lettuce
Okay, laugh with me on that one. I just wanted to make sure you're still awake. Lettuce check, shall we? ;)

6. Here vs. hear
"Here ye! Here ye!" or is it "Hear ye! Hear ye!"?
Ye listen with ye ears and hear. See the word 'ear' in hear? It's a great reminder.
Here, like there, is all about location, location, location.

7. Should of. Would of. Could of.
Maybe now would be a good time to go get yourself a Diet Coke (right Deb?) or an iced, quad-shot latte with no whip. We're almost there.

This error stems from the way it sounds.
Should have, would have, could have contract and become should've, would've, could've.

8. Moses and Jesus are the exception.
It's called an apostrophe and it seems that most of the English ~~speaking~~, errr writing world has screwed it up. For a funny read about this, I strongly recommend Brit author Lynn Truss's book, "Eats, Shoots & Leaves." She covers punctuation woes in the funniest of examples. It's a quick read and totally worth your time.

So ~~lettuce~~ let us break it down:

Possessive apostrophe.
The book belongs to Mike. The book is Mike's.
The apples belong to the class. They are the class's apples.
The computer belongs to the boys. It is the boys' computer.
The dens belong to the foxes. They are the foxes' dens.
The drink belongs to Thomas. It is Thomas's drink.
The burden belongs to Jesus. It is Jesus' burden.

Single possessives need apostrophe-s. Mike's dog, class's teacher, fox's den, Thomas's hand.
Plural possessives put an apostrophe at the end: Classes' teachers, boys' feet, foxes' den, the Joneses' house.
Only Jesus and Moses are the exception. Jesus' mother, Mary. Moses' basket was found in the bulrushes.
But let's say you have two friends - James and Alexis. It's James's mother, Mary. Alexis's basket was found in the bushes.

Rule of thumb for plural possessives: make the word plural then figure out where to put the apostrophe.

A plural never needs an apostrophe.
Never, ever for any reason when you make a single word plural do you ever add an apostrophe. It's an *apostrophe catastrophe*. (He he. funny!). It's worth repeating - if you have more than one of something, you don't need an apostrophe. You need an /s/ or /es/.
Books, bags, houses, boxes, classes, moms, dads, brothers and sisters.

Wrong: The mom's are coming over.
Wrong: The donut's are on sale.

Here in Iowa there is a ridiculous restaurant called Maid-Rite. For almost 5 years I thought it was a cleaning service, but that's a whole 'nother discussion. Check out this link: **http://www.maid-rite.com/newlocations/locations/bellevue.shtml**

See there in photo number 3? "Our Name Say's It All."

Well, it certainly does, doesn't it? It "say's" we can't spell, we can't write, and turns out we can't clean your house either. Through how many people did the sign pass in the process of designing it, making it, distributing it, hanging it, etc.?

Says is the third-person singular verb of to say. He says, she says. Verbs never need an apostrophe.

Plural names don't take an apostrophe either. Want to know how to address your Christmas cards? **No apostrophes!**
The Millers
The Joneses
The Smiths
The Thomases

Do not address a Christmas card to: The Miller's, The Jones'es or The Jones', The Smith's, The Thomas'es or The Thomas'. If there is more than one Smith, they are the Smiths, plural. If there is more than one Jones, they are the Joneses. Now you *can* use an apostrophe if you are sending a Christmas card to The Smiths' Dog. If you can't remember... spare yourself the embarrassment and write:
The Miller Family, The Smith Family, The Jones Family or The Thomas Family.
This apostrophe catastrophe can be seen on wedding invitations, RSVPs and holiday cards. How embarrassing!

9. Don't dangle your participles.

Really, everyone seems to know not to dingle dangle. But they can't figure out the dang dangle. In other words, uhhh... what's a participle? It's much easier to show you.

Wrong: Covered in gooey fudge, the kids loved their ice cream sundaes.
Uhhhh.... gooey fudge-covered kids???

Right: Covered in gooey fudge, the ice cream sundaes were quickly devoured by the kids.
Gooey fudge-covered ice cream.... yum!

Wrong: Complicated and a full of wires, I couldn't figure out the silly VCR.
What am I, a robot?

Right: Complicated and full of wires, the VCR was just too hard to figure out!
You see... the phrase talks about whatever is closest to it. So to avoid robots and fudge-covered kids... don't dangle!

10. If you're over 12 years of age, avoid txtg ur peeps in IM spk.

So, I get it that some cell phones limit the space and number of text messages you send. I comprehend

that necessity is the mother of all invention. But your blog is not a half-inch cell phone message. Do not use "u", "2", "r" and other cute-if-you're-10 text-speak. U will lose ur readers if u blog 2 them like this. Numerals are universally accepted in place of numbers in casual blogging but should be written out in all papers, work documents and more formal emails. Pretend words like "nite", "gr8", "c u l8r", "kwim?", etc., aren't universally understood by your readers. Please use real words.

That's it! Ten itty-bitty, little rules. The blogosphere will thank you! And if I could learn it at 12, you can, too!

Thanks, Mrs. Curlee, from every 12-year-old, eye-rolling, heavily sighing kid.

Art Instruction

Element of Art - covers following six topics. (Each topic consists of the Let's Learn, Let's Try, Let's Have Fun 1, Let's Have Fun 2).

- Lines
- Colours
- Shapes and Forms
- Patterns
- Textures

i) *Theory* – the child is introduced to that particular element of art and its descriptors. Colourful photographs and/or vivid illustrations are also given for greater exposure to real life examples.

ii) *Activities* – hands-on-activities which encourage the child to be creative, imaginative and using their thinking skills to help them transform their learning and observations into interesting art pieces.

*'**Line**'* opens each unit to the child and introduces the theme. Here, they are introduced to the various types of line and its descriptors such as: 'long', 'short', 'thick', 'fat', 'heavy', 'thin', 'horizontal', 'vertical', 'diagonal', 'jagged', 'smooth', 'continuous' and 'broken'. It is then followed by activities which encourage the child to experiment with a variety of lines to express moods or movement.

*'**Colour**'* creates awareness about the different categories of colour around us: Primary and Secondary. The child is also taught the names, as well as descriptors such as 'warm', 'cool', 'bright', 'dull', 'light', 'pale' and 'dark'. Different shades of colours are introduced and the child is required to put into practice what he/she has learnt through the activities that follow.

*'**Shape and Form**'* is considered an application section in which lines and colours can be combined to create boundaries within a picture to form shapes. The child is taught on 2 and 3-dimensional representations of things they see and to use a variety of shapes to represent an object, idea or feeling. Vocabulary such as 'round', 'oval', 'triangular, 'rectangular', 'broad', 'narrow' and 'spacious' are also introduced. The focus of this section is to teach the child to create and organise shapes in creative ways.

*'**Pattern**'* is all about observation, sequencing and categorisation. The child is taught to look out for repeated or contrasting colours, lines, shapes or combinations of these art elements and also to look out for patterns in the environment. After these observations, the child is encouraged to create his/her own designs using patterns.

*'**Texture**'* refers to the tactile quality of objects, either in real-life or simulated by the combination of art elements in a picture. The child is taught on the different kinds of texture and to look for and sort out objects of different texture to create a picture. He/She will be asked to guess if an object is 'rough', 'smooth', 'furry', 'prickly', 'slippery', 'hard', or 'soft' just by looking at a 2-dimensional picture.

Homemade Art Supply List

Along with a good supply of crayons, markers, chalk and lots of paper, your children (or grandchildren) will also love playing with these homemade art supplies and games. You can purchase many of them at the store, but why not save some money and teach your child how to be even more creative by making their own supplies? Children love seeing how things are made, and they love the time you will be spending with them while making these projects. If you don't have kids at home, try making up a batch of something just for yourself, I won't tell if you don't!

I have been collecting these recipes for 13 years, many of them are scribbled on a scratch piece of paper. I hope you enjoy this article, it will also serve as an art supply recipe index for my personal web site and be updated from time to time.

Glitter

Mix together 5-6 drops of food coloring and ½ c. salt, stir well. Cook in microwave for 1-2 minutes or spread out on a piece of waxed paper to air-dry. Store in an airtight container, as with all of the art supplies in this article.

Sidewalk Chalk

1 c. plaster of paris
½ c. water
2 - 3 Tbs. tempera paint

Mix plaster of paris and tempera paint, then add water and mix well. Pour into molds and let dry for 24 hours. Remove from mold and let air dry for 2 -7 days depending on size. You can use paper cups, plastic butter tubs or food trays, candy molds, muffin tins, or even toilet paper tubes covered with foil on one end.

Finger Paint

1 envelope unflavored gelatin
½ c. cornstarch
3 Tbs. sugar
2 c. cold water
food coloring
dishwashing liquid
white shelf paper

Soak gelatin in ¼ c. warm water and put aside. Combine cornstarch and sugar in medium sized pot. Gradually add remaining water and

cook slowly over low heat, stirring until well blended. Remove from heat and add gelatin. Divide into containers, adding a drop or two of d/w liquid and food coloring to each.

Paint

1 c. liquid starch
6 c. water
½ c. soap powder
Food coloring

Dissolve soap powder in water, add starch and food coloring.

Edible Peanut Butter Play Dough

1 c. peanut butter
½ c. honey
1 ½ c. powdered milk

Mix ingredients and roll into balls.

Cook Play Dough
(turns out just like the stuff at the store)
1 c. flour
½ c. salt
2 tsp. cream of tarter
Mix together and add:
1 c. water
1 Tbs. oil
food coloring

Cook on low heat, stirring constantly, until it forms a ball and becomes dull.

Kool-Aid Play Dough
(no cooking required)

3 c. flour
½ c. salt
1 pkg. Unsweetened Kool-aid
1 Tbs. alum
Mix together and add:
2 c. boiling water

Knead dough with up to an additional 1 c. of flour until it becomes the desired consistency.

Jell-O Play Dough

(no cooking required)

4 c. flour
1 c. salt
2 pkgs. unsweetened Jell-O
4 tsp. cream of tartar
Mix together and add:
2 c. boiling water
2 tsp. cooking oil or baby oil

Mix together well and knead until dough becomes the desired consistency.

Sticky Putty

¾ c. and 2 Tbs. water
1 tsp. Mule Team Borax
8 ounces white glue
Food coloring

Heat water over medium heat and add borax, stir with wooden spoon until dissolved. Add glue and a few drops of food coloring, stirring constantly until glue and water mix. Pour into a plastic bowl and cool.

Modeling Clay

1 c. cornstarch
1 ½ c. water
16 ounces baking soda

Combine cornstarch and baking soda together in large saucepan. Stir in water and cook over low heat until the mixture becomes thick and forms a ball. Remove from heat and cool. Knead the dough on a countertop dusted with cornstarch until smooth.

Air Dry Clay

3 c. flour
1 c. salt
½ c. white glue
1 c. water
1 tsp. lemon juice

Mix together until well blended. Mold into shapes or roll out and cut with cookie cutters. Let dry overnight before painting.

Paper Mache

Use a simple mixture of flour and water. Mix one part flour with about 2 parts of water until you get a consistancy like thick glue. Add more water or flour as necessary. Mix well to get out all the bumps.

Goop

2 c salt
1 c. water
1 c. cornstarch

Cook salt and 1/2 of water for 4-5 minutes. Remove from heat. Add cornstarch and remaining 1/2 of water, then return to heat. Stir until mixture thickens. You can also add food coloring to this.

Multi-colored crayons

Peel broken crayons and melt in a small aluminum pan at 350 degrees for 15 -20 minutes. Cool and break into new multi-colored pieces.

Disappearing Paint

Mix 1/8 tsp. "bluing" (a laundry additive) with 2 cups water. Paint the sidewalk and watch it disappear.

Face Paint

Mix poster paints with cold cream.

Cinnamon Clay

¼ c. white glue
1/3 c. applesauce
3 Tbs. cinnamon
1 3/4 cup flour
¼ c. water

Mix ingredients together, until dough forms a ball, knead for a minute or two adding a little more flour if needed. Make into desired shapes or roll out and cut with cookie cutters. Bake at 300 degrees for 10 minutes.

Crazy Putty
(will even bounce)
3/4 cup of white glue
Add enough liquid starch until a ball of dough is formed, then add food coloring and knead dough until it's completely worked in.

Slime

1 c. glue
Liquid starch
Food coloring (if desired)

Add starch slowly until mixture becomes the right texture... slimey.

Lap Desk

Make a pillow out of scrap material, fiberfill and some poly (plastic) beads to make it squishy. Attach a lap tray or board with strips of Velcro

Homeschool For Free

Textbooks can be found used pretty cheap even through amazon.com.
- Some local libraries have an amazing variety of books -- even textbooks!
- See if your local library has Teaching Company lecture series available for check out -- lots of topics to choose from!
- Check out Hoagies Gifted Education Page for FREE online high school courses and curriculum materials = http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/online_hs.htm

Below are more websites for free highschool resources. BEST of luck! Warmly, Lori D.

CURRICULUM BOOK LISTS / IDEAS
- Ambleside Online Curriculum = http://www.amblesideonline.org/
- Hippo Campus (free online high school helps; variety of subjects) = http://www.hippocampus.org/

MATH
- Cliffs Notes = http://www.cliffsnotes.com/WileyCDA/...id-305259.html
- Homeschool Math = http://www.homeschoolmath.net/online/algebra.php
- Highschool ACE = http://highschoolace.com/ace/math.cfm
- Extreme Intellect (free online math tutorials) = http://www.extremeintellect.com/ei20...help/math.html

LITERATURE
- MIT (free writing and English course materials online) = http://ocw.mit.edu/OcwWeb/hs/intro-courses/writing/
- Sparknotes (free lit. guides) = http://www.sparknotes.com/home/literature
- Glencoe (free lit. guides) = http://www.glencoe.com/sec/literature/litlibrary/
- Bookrags (free lit. guides) = http://www.bookrags.com/browse/Book%20Notes/
- Cliffs Notes (free lit. guides) = http://www.cliffsnotes.com/WileyCDA/...id-305321.html
- Awesome Library (books available to read online) = http://www.awesomelibrary.org/Classr...iterature.html

- Extreme Intellect (books available to read online) = http://www.extremeintellect.com/ei20...iterature.html

GRAMMAR
- English•Grammar Online = http://www.ego4u.com/en/cram-up/grammar
- Owl Online= http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/
- The Beehive = http://www.thebeehive.org/external_l.../archive.shtml
- Cliffs Notes (punctuation, capitalization, word usage) = http://www.cliffsnotes.com/WileyCDA/...eId-29011.html
- Cliffs Notes (parts of speech) = http://www.cliffsnotes.com/WileyCDA/...eId-28962.html
- list of online grammar resources = http://www.dmoz.org/Kids_and_Teens/S...glish/Grammar/

WRITING
- MIT (free writing and English course materials online) = http://ocw.mit.edu/OcwWeb/hs/intro-courses/writing/
- Cliffs Notes = http://www.cliffsnotes.com/WileyCDA/...eId-29035.html
- The Five Paragraph Essay (instruction; prompts; etc.) = http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/Atrium/1437/index.html
- narrative essay prompts = http://members.accessus.net/~bradley...eprompts2.html
- expository essay prompts (Writer's Web) = http://mh034.k12.sd.us/expository_essay_prompts.htm
- persuasive essay prompts (About.com) = http://712educators.about.com/od/ess...uasprompts.htm
- practice timed essays for SAT/ACT testing = http://www.onlinemathlearning.com/sa...y-prompts.html

FREE ONLINE WRITING LESSON PLANS
- K-12 Lesson Plan index (writing lesson ideas by grade level) = http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/index.asp
- Writing Fix (writing lessons) = http://www.writingfix.com/
- Writer's Web (list of links to writing lessons/assignments) = http://mh034.k12.sd.us/lessons%20and%20ideas.htm

SCIENCE
- MIT (free online course materials from MIT) = http://ocw.mit.edu/OcwWeb/hs/home/teachers/
- Free High School Science Texts = http://www.fhsst.org/
- Cliffs Notes = http://www.cliffsnotes.com/WileyCDA/...id-305260.html
- Highschool ACE (biology) = http://highschoolace.com/ace/biology.cfm
- Highschool ACE (chemistry) = http://highschoolace.com/ace/chemistry.cfm
- Highschool ACE (physics) = http://highschoolace.com/ace/physics.cfm
- Highschool ACE (earth science) = http://highschoolace.com/ace/science.cfm
- Extreme Intellect (science homework helper list of free online resources) = http://www.extremeintellect.com/ei20...p/science.html

HISTORY
- Cliffs Notes (U.S. colonial to 1850s) = http://www.cliffsnotes.com/WileyCDA/...eId-25073.html
- Cliffs Notes (U.S. 1850s to present) = http://www.cliffsnotes.com/WileyCDA/...eId-25238.html
- Highschool ACE (U.S.) = http://highschoolace.com/ace/government.cfm

- Highschool ACE (world) = http://highschoolace.com/ace/history.cfm

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT / ECONOMICS
- Cliffs Notes (government) = http://www.cliffsnotes.com/WileyCDA/...eId-65383.html
- Cliffs Notes (economics) = http://www.cliffsnotes.com/WileyCDA/...leId-9789.html

COMPUTER
- Free online tutorials in various computer topics = http://www.lausd.k12.ca.us/Jefferson_HS/lscomp.htm

REFERENCE
- Wikipedia (free online encyclopedia) = www.wikipedia.org
- Extreme Intellect (list of free online reference materials) = http://www.extremeintellect.com/ei20...clopedias.html

Curriculum Choices of Real Homeschoolers

I like Abeka Books for Spelling, Math, Science and Health, in addition to How to Eat to Live of course. You can find them at: www.abeka.com. They are one of my favorites.

I also like Singapore Math for Math and Science. You can find them at: www.singaporemath.com. A friend just shared this website with me. They have one of the highest Math Scores in the World.

I also like Alpha Omega Publications for Science. www.aop.com

For Grammar, I like Easy Grammar by Wanda Phillips. You can find it at www.rainbowresource.com. They are a great well known homeschool website(huge inventory of books), too!

For Math- Math Dr. Videos are superb! He makes it so easy to understand. The Final Call has his videos.

For Handwriting, Universal Publishing has some nice practice workbooks. www.universalpublishing.com

For History and Geography, I go to a website called www.thebackpack.com where they sell used textbooks, so I just pick ones I may like.

Submitted by Sis Rita Muhammad

Warning Super Long Curriculum/Planning Post Below!

Ok, after months of research, here's the plan for next year. I'm going to resist anymore tweaking, and God-forbid, adding to it. I truly believe I've come up with a challenging course of study for the Master and Princess. We'll be busy for sure. I'll post more on our yearly and daily schedule later.

Curriculum review sites
These are excellent for getting other educators' opinions.

http://cathyduffyreviews.com/index.html
http://homeschoolreviews.com/default.aspx

This is a nice online organizer. I have not used it yet, but Kysha gave it rave reviews.
http://www.homeschooltracker.com/

Here is a nice basic scope and sequence for K-3rd grade
http://www.homeschoolshare.com/scope_and_sequence.php

Where I have and will buy from

http://www.criticalthinking.com/index.jsp
http://www.hometrainingtools.com/
http://www.lakeshorelearning.com/home/
http://www.christianbook.com/?kw=www_christianbook&event=PPCSRC&p=1008728
(Christian Books' prices are usually better than Amazon!)
http://www.noorart.com/

This is what we are doing next year by subject.

Quran/Islamic Studies
We will continue learning the Surah titles as well as 4 of the short surahs in their entirety. I want them to be able to complete salat, wadu to finish. We are also studying the Prophets of Gods while acting out the stories and narrating them as review. I've gathered a lot of coloring sheets and activity pages that I would like to make to bind and make a book out of them.

Math
http://www.mathusee.com/
Awesome, awesome, awesome. We love Math-U-See. We'll be in Alpha.

Language Arts
Phonics
Explode the Code phonics workbooks
http://www.epsbooks.com/dynamic/catalog/series.asp?seriesonly=1460M

Lots and Lots of Sight Word games including our Islamic sight words
http://gemini.es.brevard.k12.fl.us/sheppard/reading/dolch.html
I got a sight word bingo game at the teacher's store in South Carolina. The twins love bingo!

Grammar
I'm using Muhammad's Children First Grade Reader for activities. I bought this at a Saviours' Day a couple years ago. I also have a grammar textbook that I plan to pull lessons from. We'll be covering the parts of speech, constructing sentences, and punctuation.
I've also created some file folder games and bought some word tiles and Mad Libs. I'm to incorporate some Montessori ideas as well to liven this up.

Spelling
Natural Speller
http://www.designastudy.com/products/1891975005.html
We are only going to start with 4 words a week and take it very slowly.

Penmanship
Copywork from the Holy Quran and Bible

Science
http://triviumacademy.blogspot.com/2008/04/our-k-8-science-by-seasons.html
My plan looks just like hers. Science Scope is a good a resource to design your own scope and sequence.
Library, Library, Library!

Social Studies
Geography
The children already know the continents and major oceans. So they have chosen 10 countries

to continue the Where in the World are the Muhammads? game. We'll spend 3-4 weeks on each country.
Library, Library, Library!

History
Again, we'll be covering the Prophets of Gods along with many parables and stories from the Holy Quran and Bible.

Spanish
I found a cassette tape program that covers the basics in Goodwill. I'll use a lot of the games we used last year but in Spanish like color and number bingo, Jump on the Number, and our fav, the Who Are You? Quiz. Candyland in Spanish should also be fun. After we have to basics covered, I'll start sticking post-it notes all over the house to learn 5 nouns and 1 verb each week using our Spanish dictionary.
Another good tip is to watch those videos that name things, Baby Einstein DVDs for example, in Spanish using to Language option.

The following subjects will only be covered formally just twice per week:

Vocabulary
My own activities using words from this site
http://www.learningthings.com/samples/EPS/WordlyWise30002Ed/WordListByLevel.pdf
Our goals is to learn 200 new words which is 5 new words a week. I plan to allow the children to take turns choosing a list each week just as a way to involve them. I'll keep them posted somewhere at all times so we can work them into our everyday vocab. Vocabulary is important to me because a well developed command of words is the mark of a great leader. I want great leaders!

We will also be stepping up our literature selections. Charlotte Mason believed hearing well-written books are a wonderful way to grow a child's vocabulary and grammar skills.

Latin/Greek Root Words
http://www.kent.k12.wa.us/KSD/MA/resources/greek_and_latin_roots/transition.html
Our goal is to learn 40 prefixes /suffixes, one per week. I'm going to make a word wall from these and the vocabulary words that we can use to review.

Art/Music Appreciation

We'll spend 3-4 weeks listening to the music and studying the art of one visual and one music artist.

The library and internet are my only resources for this.

I'm so excited! This is going to be so much fun! I really want to start now, but I better wait until after their birthday. Amir and Yasina love to learn and as long I keep it fun and as hands-on as possible, they'll love it. If I find that it's too much, we'll just drop some things until next year, no big deal. I really want to see what they can do and don't ever want to hold them back from what they are capable of achieving. So now I'm just waiting to put this plan into action . . . Of course I'll keep you updated.

http://dirtyfaceangelsacademy.blogspot.com/2008/07/2008-2009-school-year-plans.html

Submitted by Sis Lakisa Muhammad

Here is the list of topics/lessons I use to teach the children. I tried to put them in the order I plan to introduce them in build a strong foundation. Hope this helps.

Who is Allah?
Who is Elijah Muhammad?
Who is Minister Farrakhan?
Allah Created Everything
What do Muslims look like? (our dress)
What do Muslims eat? (dietary laws, but focus on what we DO eat)
Introduce the Holy Quran
Opening Prayer
Closing Prayer--Al Fatiha (I'm actually teaching this one first, because it's shorter and used more)
5 Pillars
Belief
  Care and handling of the Holy Quran
  Introduce of Nation Books
  Al Shahada in Arabic and English
Fasting
Charity
Hajj
Prayer
  # of prayers Salat positions
  Turning to the East Why do we pray?
  abulution/wudu
English Lesson No. C-1
Meaning of the Flag

Pledge
Fight Song
MGT song for girls
Question 12/Question 14
114 Surahs (I use this time to teach stories of the Holy Quran)
66 Books of the Bible (Same as Quran)
99 Attributes of Allah (I use each attribute for Character building instruction)
Actual Facts
Student Enrollment
What the Muslims Believe
What the Muslims Want
Instructions to the Laborers
Lost Found Muslim Lesson 1,2
Problem Book
Proper Handling of People
Book of Feminity
The Meaning of FOI

As they get older, I plan to ask them to keep Quran/Bible notebooks to keep copywork (short surahs, important ayats); character building assignments, and notes from our study.

We will create a Nation of Islam timeline. Inshallah.

Pick a video of the month to watch at least once a week.

Remember to keep it as fun as possible so that she has good feelings and thoughts about the lessons. I correct the children very gently during this time.

Submitted by Lakisa Muhammad

Books

The Complete Works of The Most Honorable Elijah Muhammad

The Complete Works of The Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan

100+ Educational Strategies to Teach Children of Color-Jawanza Kunjufu

African American History: A Journey of Liberation-Dr.Molefi Kete Asante

Awakening the Natural Genius of Black Children-Amos N. Wilson

Child's Play-Monica Cardoza

Countering the Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys-Jawanza Kunjufu

Black Students/Middle Class Teachers-Jawanza Kunjufu

Dumbing Us Down-John Taylor Gatto

Developing Positive Self Images & Discipline in Our Children-Jawanza Kunjufu

The Educational Philosophy of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad -Abdul Pitre

Freedom Challenge: African American Homeschoolers-Grace Llewellyn

Help for the Harried Homeschooler-Christine Field

Home Learning Year by Year- Rebecca Rupp

Homeschooling 101-Christine Field

Homeschooling the Challenging Child-Christine Field

How to Raise an Amazing Child the Montessori Way-Tim Seldin

How to Teach Math to Black Students-Shahid Muhammad

Life Skills for Kids-Christine Field

Marva Collins' Way-Marva Collins

Mommy, Teach Me-Barbara Curtis

Mommy, Teach Me to Read- Barbara Curtis

Montessori: Play and Learn by Leslie Britton

Morning by Morning-Paula Penn-Nabrit

Motivating and Preparing Black Youth for Success-Jawanza Kunjufu

The Power of a Praying Parent-Stromie Omartian

Ordinary Teachers, Extraordinary Teachers-Marva Collins

Savage Inequalities-Jonathan Kozol

Teach Me to Do it Myself by Maja Pitamic

Teach Your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons- Siegfried Engelman

The Ultimate Book of Homeschooling Ideas: 500+ Fun and Creative Learning Activities for Kids Ages 3-12 -Linda Dobson

The Well Trained Mind- Susan Wise

Values: Lighting the Candle of Excellence-Marva Collins

Websites

Islamic Studies

www.noorart.com Great source for books, games, and toys

www.niambishouse.webs.com From Our Sister!

http://www.nlightnlearning.com From Our Brother!

www.quranexplorer.com

www.creativeforcedesigns.com From Our Brother!

http://classtools.net/widgets/quiz/quiz91768_114_questions__title_of_quiz_goes_here_.htm/ Practice the Surah Titles

www.islamicedfoundation.com

www.thenationofislam.org/supremewisdom.html

Preschool/Kindergarten

www.starfall.com Teaches reading to small children
www.abcya.com Great for the young ones

www.pbskids.org

www.montessoriforeveryone.com

www.faculty.fullerton.edu/syen/mts/_link.htm Online Montessori Album of Activities

www.fisher-price.com Online games for Infants and Toddlers

www.makinglearningfun.com

www.childcareland.com

www.fiveinarow.com Literture based curriculum

Mathematics

www.ixl.com Math practice for Pre-K through 6th Grade

www.learn-with-math-games.com

www.mathisfun.com

www.mathslice.com

http://illuminations.nctm.org Electronic Abacus

www.math-drills.com

www.kenken.com Math based puzzles

www.orangekids.com Financial Literacy

Language Arts

www.spellingcity.com Great spelling exercises

www.myschoolhouse.com Lessons and worksheets

www.owl.english.purdue.edu Creative writing

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/typing/ Free Typing Program

www.zaner-bloser.com/ Make your handwriting sheets

www.handwritingforkids.com

http://donnayoung.org/penmanship/big-cursive.htm Cursive practice

http://pbskids.org/lions/stories/ Between the Lions Stories and Activities

www.englishgrammar101.com/

www.learningbooks.net/xLPDolch.html Sight word practice

Science

www.khanacademy.org Learn from a math master.

www.nasa.gov

www.physics4kids.com

www.edheads.org Awesome, awesome, awesome

www.hometrainingtools.com Great hands-on products

www.msnucleus.org Grades K-6

www.eequalsmcq.com Elementary Life Science

www.snapcircuits.net

www.billnye.com Bill Nye Science Guy

Social Studies

www.nationalgeographic.com National geographic also has great geography quizzes for children.

www.thebma.org Black Media Archives

www.kidsgeo.com

www.yourchildlearns.com Maps

http://earth.google.com Google Earth

Arts and Culture

www.nga.gov/kids Art for Children

www.lakeshorelearning.com Craft ideas

www.dltk-kids.com Craft ideas

www.princetonol.com Art Lessons

www.alifetimeofcolor.com Create Online

Foreign Languages

www.rosettastone.com

www.livemocha.com

www.early-advantage.com Muzzy Language Program

www.123teachme.com Spanish for Children

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryspanish

http://sites.google.com/site/funarabicworksheets/ Arabic Worksheets

For the Teacher

www.rainbowresource.com The Mother of Curriculum Catalogs

www.christianbook.com Great Homeschool Section

www.ezschool.com Great worksheets and more

www.internet4classrooms.com Great quizzes

www.lakeshorelearning.com Teacher help and free classes

www.iknowthat.com Great learning games

www.freeworldu.com Has info to teach all grades, really nice website!

www.extralearning.net

www.clickschooling.com New internet resources everyday

www.apples4theteacher.com

www.discusawards.com High Schoolers!

www.highschoolace.com High Schoolers!

www.donnayoung.org Organizational Help

http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools

www.superkids.com Worksheets and more

www.funbrain.com