



**HOW
TO
CHOOSE**

Curriculum

how do I **CHOOSE** *Curriculum?*



Once upon a time, homeschool curriculum was difficult to come by. Many families used whatever they could find, which often included books designed for public or private schools. Today's homeschool parents face the opposite problem. There is so much out there that it can be extremely difficult to sift through all of the options. Unfortunately, even experienced homeschool parents can choose a curriculum or book that just doesn't work. But with a little thought and planning, the likelihood that a curriculum will work for your student can be greatly increased.

CHOOSING BASED ON STYLE

As you're sorting through the options available to you, a good starting point is to consider both learning and teaching styles.

First, ask some questions about your teaching style. Do you like having a teacher's guide, workbooks, and a strict plan with a script to follow? You might want a traditional curriculum. Do you like short, gentle lessons with lots of good read-alouds? Check out Charlotte Mason-based materials. Are classical languages and literature important to you? You might be a Classical homeschooler. Do you like to study topics in depth and do lots of hands-on activities? Unit studies might be for you. Do you want to have your student use the computer and be taught by someone who is an expert for each subject? Consider computer-based or online curriculum. The answers to these questions will give you an idea of what type of curriculum you are looking for.

Now think about each of your students. The truth is that what works for one student may not work for another. Read about learning styles and consider which category your student falls into. Is he a visual learner, remembering best what is seen? Is she an auditory learner who needs music to study and likes to have material read to her? Or do you have a kinesthetic learner, always bouncing around and learning best by experiencing the subject?

CHOOSING BASED ON METHOD

Armed with an honest evaluation of how you teach and how your child learns, the next step is to process through the main curriculum types based on one of the methods mentioned above.

TRADITIONAL METHOD



Traditional curricula tend to mimic what you would find at brick-and-mortar schools and may often be found with both a homeschool and traditional school option on their websites. These curricula usually include a teacher's guide, textbooks, and workbooks. Sometimes they will include lab materials or videos. The lessons are laid out for the parent, often with script-like instructions that the parent can read to the student. Traditional curricula also tend to be rather expensive and are designed to use with one child at a specific grade-level. You can choose a traditional curriculum for just one subject, or you can choose to buy a grade-level package that covers all of the subjects.

Traditional curricula are good if you:

- know your student will be going back into a traditional school setting soon.
- have a child who works well with workbooks and memorization.

Avoid traditional curriculum if you:

- have a child who does not fit with a strong visual, memorization-based learning style.
- intend to teach multiple children/grades.
- need or desire hands-on options.

CHARLOTTE MASON METHOD



Charlotte Mason-style curricula have become extremely popular in homeschool circles. These curricula are designed around short lessons based largely in literature Mason called "living books," books that are written by someone who

is passionate about the subject. You would expect to find dictation, copywork, nature study, and art and music appreciation in this type of curriculum. Subjects such as art, music, history, Bible, and sometimes science tend to be taught to all children in the family at one time, while math and reading/language arts instruction would need to be done separately.

A Charlotte Mason curriculum is good if you:

- desire to encourage a love for books.
- need to strengthen a struggling reader.
- have a child who craves hands-on learning.
- have access to a local library or book share system.

Avoid the Charlotte Mason approach if you:

- desire a test-oriented or textbook approach.
- need to work within the curriculum confines of a local school system.

CLASSICAL METHOD



Classical curricula are designed around a liberal arts approach based on the trivium, three learning cycles that students go through as they mature. Students study classical artists, musicians, and literature, and usually learn Latin and Greek. Many classical curricula allow families to teach their children together for subjects such as history and art, with students learning and producing at a different level based on which trivium cycle they are in.

A classical curriculum is a good choice if you:

- are seeking a rigorous and structured program.
- desire your children to learn classical languages at an early age.
- want to coordinate with an established program incorporating multiple families.

Avoid classical curricula if you:

- need or desire curriculum flexibility.
- have a child who needs more hands-on, relaxed learning.

UNIT STUDY METHOD



Unit studies attempt to get most, if not all, subjects in while studying a unifying, overall theme. This allows students to study a topic in depth and usually includes many hands-on projects and activities. Unless you find pre-structured unit study guides, unit studies

tend to be time-intensive for the teacher, as planning and finding materials for all of the projects and activities can be time-consuming. Most families who use unit studies teach their children together, with a possible exception of phonics and/or math. A good unit study approach will take into account the fact that these subjects need to be sequential and are difficult to teach effectively within unit study topics.

You will be likely to enjoy unit studies if you:

- love projects and lots of hands-on activities.
- like to teach most subjects around an all-encompassing theme.
- want to teach all of your children together.

Avoid unit studies if you:

- want a traditional, school-oriented approach to learning.
- expect students to follow specific, grade-level standards.

ONLINE/COMPUTER-BASED METHOD



Online and/or computer-based curricula can use a variety of different teaching and learning styles. Most of them teach specific subjects at a grade-level and therefore are for individual students. Many are expensive, so some families use them just for a subject that is difficult for the parents to teach. Families will also need a computer for each student in the house if several students will be doing a majority of their subjects online such that they cannot easily take turns. Computer-based programs free up parents from some of the responsibility of correcting work and assigning grades.

A computer-based or online curriculum might be a good fit if you:

- have high school students who are taking subjects you aren't comfortable teaching.
- are using this method for only one student or have the ability to purchase multiple computers.
- desire to shift a portion of the responsibility for teaching and grading to another individual, while still keeping your student at home.

Consider another type of curriculum if you:

- have young students.
- are uncomfortable with your child having online access.

By considering what works best for you as the teacher and how your student learns best, you can make your choices from the curricula that match what will work best for your family.

STUDENT: _____

CLASS
form

SUBJECT	PUBLISHER/TITLE/SOURCE	PURCHASE DATE / PRICE	
		1 st Semester	2nd Semester
MATH			
HISTORY			
SCIENCE			
LANGUAGE ARTS			
TOTALS			

ADDITIONAL LITERATURE	PURCHASE DATE / PRICE	
	1 st Semester	2nd Semester
TOTALS		

EXPENSES	TOTALS
1 st Semester	
2 nd Semester	
NOTES	

SCHOOL YEAR: _____

CURRICULUM *plan*

[illegible]

















































SCHOOL YEAR: _____

CURRICULUM *plan*

[illegible]

CURRICULUM *plan*

SCHOOL YEAR: _____

SUBJECT	CHILD 1	CHILD 2	CHILD 3	CHILD 4
				
				
				
				
				
				
				
				
				
				
				
				

SCHOOL YEAR: _____

CURRICULUM	CHILD 2	CHILD 3	CHILD 4
<i>plan</i>			

[illegible]

SCHOOL YEAR: _____

STUDENT(S) _____

CURRICULUM

planning

MATH	HISTORY	SCIENCE
LANGUAGE ARTS		

SCHOOL YEAR: _____

STUDENT(S) _____

CURRICULUM

planning

SUBJECT	SUBJECT	SUBJECT
SUBJECT	SUBJECT	SUBJECT
SUBJECT	SUBJECT	SUBJECT
SUBJECT	SUBJECT	SUBJECT

SCHOOL YEAR: _____

STUDENT(S) _____

CURRICULUM *planning*

MATH	HISTORY	SCIENCE	LANGUAGE ARTS

SCHOOL YEAR: _____
STUDENT(S) _____

CURRICULUM *planning*

SUBJECT	SUBJECT	SUBJECT	SUBJECT
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