



The Everyday Educator

Janice Campbell

making time for things that matter.

Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, and a life.
Charlotte Mason

What will your children remember?

When I ask my boys what they remember about their homeschool experience, they don't talk about tidy schedules and stacks of paper. They talk about the living books we read, independent projects, dinner-table debates, time spent outdoors (lots of it!), and the surprise of getting to college and finding out they actually knew a lot compared to their peers, even though they'd had fun learning it. I'm grateful for that.

It wasn't that we knew what were doing—sometimes I felt as if I knew nothing at all! But I remembered the frustration of my own school experience; the feeling that so much time was being wasted and I wasn't learning any of the things I wanted to know. I wanted to spare the boys that experience and give them a richer, deeper education than I had received. Homeschooling gave us the chance to learn and grow together, and I'm grateful for that, too. I hope that you and your family will have delightful memories too.

Wishing you a joyful homeschool journey,

Janice Campbell

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Good books for Homeschool Parents

- *For the Children's Sake* by Susan Schaeffer Macaulay
- *Last Child in the Woods* by Richard Louv
- *Shop Class as Soulcraft* by Matthew B. Crawford
- Charlotte Mason's series on how to teach

In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.
Isaiah 30:15

New books!

- *CursiveLogic Poems, Rhymes, and Songs: Bridge to Level 2*
- *CursiveLogic U.S. Presidents and Citizens: Level 2*

We've added more books used in AmblesideOnline.org and other living books curricula—here's just a few!

- *The Story Book of Science* – Fabre
- *Paul Fleisher's Secrets of the Universe*
- *The Wonderland of Nature* by Nuri Maas
- *The Great Astronomers* – Robert Ball
- *Burgess Animal Book* (also Flower and Bird Books) w/color illustrations!
- *The Secrets of the Woods* – William Long
- *Number Stories of Long Ago* – David Eugene Smith
- *Sing Song* – Rossetti
- *Men of Iron* – Howard Pyle

How to enjoy the convention

What you need most—information or curriculum—will help you decide where to focus. The key to enjoying your day is to prioritize and to realize you don't need to make decisions on the spot. You could decide to:

- Purchase the MP3 of all the workshops and spend all your time in the exhibit hall (that's what I usually did).
- Spend part of the day gathering catalogs and talking with vendors, then enjoy a few workshops as you think about what you've seen.
- Visit the specific speakers and vendors you want to see, then either listen to a few workshops, or make an organized sweep through the entire vendor hall.
- Make a quick sweep through the exhibit hall and take advantage of convention specials on resources you know you'll need; then spend the rest of the day doing what interests you most.
- If you are just getting started and truly don't know what you need or want, purchase the MP3 of all the workshops, then spend the day talking with speakers, authors, and exhibitors who have resources appropriate for your children's age. Gather catalogs and literature from everyone, and take it home to read. You can always order online, and some small vendors will even honor convention specials if you e-mail and tell them you met them at the conference but weren't ready to purchase then.

Janice Campbell and her husband, Donald, homeschooled their four sons using a lifestyle of learning approach influenced by Charlotte Mason and classical education. She writes and speaks nationwide, and is the author of the Excellence in Literature curriculum, Transcripts Made Easy, and other resources.

It is what you read when you don't have to that determines what you will be when you can't help it.

—Oscar Wilde

Look for us online!

- Website: Everyday-Education.com— Here you will find all our resources, plus articles on how to use Excellence in Literature, how to teach spelling with the 1857 McGuffey Readers, and more.
- Context resources for teaching literature: Excellence-in-Literature.com
- Blog: DoingWhatMatters.com—Several years of posts on education, entrepreneurship, and soul care.

Social Media

- pinterest.com/janicecampbell/ facebook.com/excellenceinlit
- google.com/+JaniceCampbell twitter.com/everydayedu

7 Tips for Peaceful Homeschooling

1- Know where you are going before you gain momentum.

(Once you've gained momentum, it's hard to change direction!)

In Stephen Covey's *7 Habits of Highly Successful People*, he points out that you must begin with the end in mind in order to be sure you're on the right track. Plan your homeschooling path by envisioning where you want your family to be in 5, 10, 20 years, then work backward to decide on the steps you need to take to reach that goal.

Just as a map helps you reach a travel destination, a clear vision of the family life you desire (you can describe your goals in a family mission statement) can make time and money management choices much easier. Our family mission statement included the goal of creating "a loving, serene, creative environment that encourages personal and spiritual growth as part of a warm, nurturing family." That helped us to be thankful, rather than unhappy, when circumstances and finances combined to give us more time at home than we anticipated.

2- Remember that children don't remember what you do; they remember how you made them feel.

Let your actions and words convey to your children—daily, hourly—that they are loved and very important to you. One major way to convey love is to speak lovingly. That means no yelling, and no saying hurtful things. Unkind or careless speech has a lot to do with self-control, and that can be helped or hindered by the life we live (I'll talk more about that in a later point). Be ready to listen, to apologize if you've been impatient or wrong, and be gentle and kind. Ephesians 4:29-32 has been my lifelong, heartfelt goal in this area.

3- Understand that this season of life will be over before you know it.

Don't put off doing the fun things! When I began homeschooling, my first son was five, and my fourth son hadn't yet been born. Looking forward, it seemed as if I'd be homeschooling for the rest of my life, but it hasn't been that way at all.

I think that if I had known how short the time would be, I would have made more time for special projects and field trips, as those are the things that they remember. As it was, I often felt so pushed to get in the basics that the fun stuff fell by the wayside. In retrospect, they would have learned more doing something creative or memorable than they did from another page of math.

Knowing how brief the homeschooling years are, you may want to make provision for when you are retired from daily school work. Consider your gifts, and how you can use them for others. A home business can be a wonderful thing, but there are many other ways you can use the time formerly spent in homeschooling. Start thinking about it now, as the time will come sooner than you think, and it's comforting to be prepared.

4- Use habits and routines to help make life simpler and more streamlined.

Charlotte Mason said that "a habit is ten natures," and she advocated training children in orderly habits of mind and body. Through the hectic years of child-training, home-schooling, and care-giving, I have found that simple habits and routine can keep the household (and learning) happening, even when unexpected events occur. (There is a very helpful discussion of habit in Charlotte Mason's *A Philosophy of Education*.)

5- It's not only okay to be different, sometimes it's best.

Learn to evaluate learning materials, curricula, activities, and other things by asking whether they will move you closer to or farther from your family goals. That will help you make wise choices!

Even if everyone else you know chooses unit studies or a textbook-based curriculum, don't do it if it's not the right choice for your family. It is your job to choose the curricula that fits your student's learning style and your family's needs, and it doesn't matter what others do. They are responsible for their family; you are responsible for yours. Do the research it takes to make choices that fit your family—it makes a difference. (And if you are a worrier, please see #7.)

6- Learn to say "no" to things that will be a distraction from your family's mission and goals, even when they are good things.

As homeschoolers, we have many opportunities for fun and valuable learning experiences. We can do co-ops, 4H, sports, community activities, church activities, and much, much more. There is so much to do, and so many busy people running around doing it all, that you can begin to feel guilty for saying no to most of it. After all, these are usually good things!

I said "no" to most things because I had to — I was caring for my grandparents throughout our homeschool years. I was nearly through homeschooling when I realized that even though I began saying no to a lot of activities because I had to, I ended up saying no because "no" was the key to creating the life we wanted for our family. Our mission of creating "a loving, serene, creative environment that encourages personal and spiritual growth as part of a warm, nurturing family" was easier to achieve because we were home. It would have been difficult to fulfill that mission and to be kind and patient with one another when everyone is exhausted from too much running around and busy-ness. When you can discern the difference between important things and busywork, you can say no without feeling guilty.

7- Know that in a loving, wholesome, book-filled home, learning will happen, even when crises interfere with the planned teaching schedule.

During the early years of homeschooling, I created meticulous lesson plans and elaborate schedules that worked very well, until we took in my grandparents. My grandfather had Alzheimer's disease, and life became a series of crises as he would wander off, often onto a nearby freeway, or become unexpectedly hostile. It was a terribly stressful time.

Through the final two years of his life, it was nearly impossible to keep up with lesson plans. I relied heavily on audio resources, including classic literature, classical music and composer biographies, geography and science songs, history tapes, and more. Each year, as they took the state-required standardized test, I'd be anxious until their scores arrived, then relieved to find them in the 90th percentile or above, as they had been before my carefully laid plans met reality.

I realized that "teaching" is not a synonym for "learning." Learning can happen anytime, anyplace, and does not always require strict lesson plans and worksheets. As Charlotte Mason said, "Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, and a life."

A rich learning lifestyle makes growth—mental, spiritual, physical—almost inevitable, so fill your home with good books and beautiful music. Take trips to art museums and botanical gardens. Spend a lot of time outdoors. Learn to make things with your hands. Have long talks around the dinner table. Live a learning lifestyle and your children will learn. Feast on beauty, truth, and goodness, and your family can flourish, even in challenging times.

"When you wish to instruct, be brief; that men's [children's] minds take in quickly what you say, learn its lesson, and retain it faithfully.

Every word that is unnecessary only pours over the side of a brimming mind."

Marcus Tullius Cicero

Does Penmanship Matter?

I won't keep you in suspense—I believe it matters a lot. Because handwriting is a learning tool—one of the primary communication skills through which other subjects are understood—mastering the mechanics of penmanship well enough to do it easily and fluently will make every other task that uses writing simpler and less stressful. Clear penmanship is an art form that virtually anyone can master. Just five minutes of practice every day can improve handwriting.

Penmanship is a learning tool

The act of writing is an act of learning. In his excellent book, *Writing to Learn*, William Zinsser compellingly demonstrates that writing about a subject is the best way to immerse and deeply understand it. This would not be news to Francesco Petrarca, the 14th century scholar who devoted his life to discovering and copying by hand great works of Latin literature by Cicero and others.

In one letter to a friend, explaining why he had kept a borrowed volume of Cicero's orations for four years, Petrarca describes writing "page after page, delighting in my task, and committing many and many a passage to memory." Most telling is his explanation of why he was able to remember what he wrote: "For just in proportion as the writing is slower than the reading does the passage make a deep impression and cling to the mind." In other words, because you can't skim read when copying, you can remember what you read.

Further on in the letter, he describes growing weary and wondering if the labor of copying was worth it, then coming across a passage in which the great Cicero describes having copied orations from others in order to study them and to avoid idleness. He is immediately ashamed, "like a modest young soldier who hears the voice of his beloved leader rebuking him," and renews his commitment to finishing the copy of Cicero's work.

Charlotte Mason confirms the importance of writing as a learning tool throughout her work; especially in her language arts sequence. She suggests that the earliest writing practice for children "should be, not letter writing or dictation, but transcription [copywork], slow and beautiful work." Of course, the art of writing goes beyond simple penmanship or copywork, but both Zinsser and Mason competently explain how to take it further.

*True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,
As those move easiest who have learn'd to dance.*

Alexander Pope

Penmanship can be a spiritual practice

Just as wind and water shape and transform nature, the things you do shape and transform your mind. A lifetime of reading, copying, and meditating on scripture, literature, and poetry has shown me that there are few things as simple and so powerful as the act of writing. Wise learners throughout the ages have attested to this:

- When a king of Israel took the throne, he was expected to "write for himself in a book a copy of the law . . . and it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life" (Deuteronomy 17:18-20) in order to gain wisdom and humility, and in order to prosper.
- Petrarch notes that writing helps the mind retain what it has written, thus it is a good way to store God's word in your heart (Psalm 119:11).

- Zinsser describes ways in which writing helps the mind process what it takes in, thus moving from knowledge to understanding.
- Charlotte Mason passionately describes the necessity for furnishing the mind with living ideas, and outlines the role of copying—"slow and beautiful work"—in cultivating wisdom and virtue.

In my experience, the act of focused copying in the most beautiful penmanship you can muster disciplines body, mind, and spirit. First, in order to write beautifully (or even legibly), it is necessary to slow down, sit upright with forearm supported, breathe fully, and hold the pen correctly in a relaxed grip. As the body settles into writing, the mind engages with the text, absorbing and meditating as words take shape on the page.

When body and mind are focused, and quiet, it is then that the spirit can be touched. In times of distress when you have no words for prayer, copying the Psalms (prayers and songs) of David can comfort the spirit. When you are seeking guidance at difficult times, copying from the beatitudes, parables, or wisdom books can open a door to deeper understanding of what wisdom, virtue, and love look like in practice. If you want to learn a poem by heart, copy and ponder it. To copy is to absorb, and to create conditions in which eternal truths can shape the heart and mind.

*If writing is thought made visible;
poor penmanship is mumbling made visible.*

Resources to help with handwriting

If you don't feel that your handwriting is clear enough to be a good example to your students, you may want to learn along with them. Kids usually enjoy having a parent working alongside, and it can be a good reminder for us that the things we ask our students to do aren't always easy!

Perfect Reading, Beautiful Handwriting begins with simple, upright italic penmanship, and ends with instructions for creating joins to transform it into a beautiful, legible, cursive italic. Five minutes of focused practice each day can accomplish a lot, and the example you set can inspire your children to work more diligently at what they need to accomplish.

If you prefer cursive writing, *CursiveLogic* makes it easy to teach penmanship in four easy lessons. Level two provides additional practice, and all levels can be used together with the *Art of Cursive* coloring book that provides a beautiful way to practice letting within the context of a picture. The images in the coloring book remind me of the beautiful images created by master penmen long ago.

French-ruled composition books: Charlotte Mason had her students keep many notebooks (you can read about all the types in *The Living Page*), and students are often inspired to work more neatly when working in a book rather than on single sheets. I've recently been able to get some of the composition books that French schoolchildren do their work in. They have a unique system of lines that helps a student's writing stay neat and contained, and the smooth, opaque paper makes writing a pleasure.

I've written more at my blog, and included a compelling TED talk by a modern Master Penman, as well as links other helpful articles and resources. You can see my recommended handwriting curriculums on page 6 of this newsletter.

— doingwhatmatters.com/penmanship-matters/

Look for *CursiveLogic* 1, 1.5, and 2, *the Art of Cursive*, and *Perfect Reading, Beautiful Handwriting* at my booth!

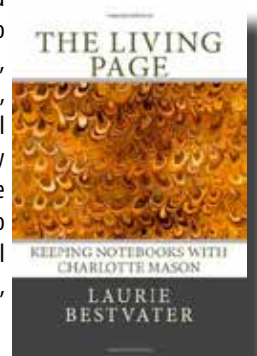
Make Time for Things that Matter

Just added!

The Living Page: Keeping Notebooks with Charlotte Mason

Have you ever wondered exactly what Charlotte Mason taught her students about using notebooks? In this well-researched work, Laurie Bestvater covers when and how to bring learning to life by using nature notebooks, a calendar of firsts, fortitude journal, copybooks, a book of centuries, music diaries, way of the will chart, a household book, and more. She not only describes each book and how to use it, but she offers inspiration and a “grand invitation” into Charlotte Mason’s vision of an effective, personal learning journey. This book is a wonderful resource, and I recommend it highly.

Non-consumable, 7.4 x 5.8”; 406 pages, \$16.95



Create a nourishing home environment

- Time— unhurried, unstructured, serene— is the most important ingredient.
- Have a gentle heart toward your children.
- The sweetness of lips increases learning. Proverbs 16:21

Do and be (don't sit and stare)

- Aristotle wrote – “Only a blockhead can fail to realize that our characters are the result of our conduct. It is our choice of good or evil that daily determines our character, not our opinion of good or evil. We become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts... Our moral dispositions are formed as a result of the corresponding activities in each moment and each day.”

Include children in adult activities

- Be the kind of adult you want your child to become. Rather than providing a room full of toys, let your children tag along and “help” with activities.
- Remember that “Getting things done is not always what is most important. There is value in allowing others to learn, even if the task is not accomplished as quickly, efficiently or effectively.” - R. D. Clyde

Rediscover solitude

- The ‘Quiet Hour’ is time for nourishment of the heart. Use it as needed, depending on the season of life—nap, reading, prayer, writing, creative arts, etc.

Converse with your children; they are people, too.

- The person who is with you is always a higher priority than anything on a screen.
- Getting to know your children can be fun, and studies suggest that conversing with adults can aid their brain and vocabulary development.
- “If I had to make a general rule for living and working with children, it might be this: be wary of saying or doing anything to a child that you would not do to another adult, whose good opinion and affection you valued.” *John Holt*

Plant ideas; allow time for knowledge to grow

- Understand developmental stages and learning styles. It really matters.
- GIGO— the quality of what goes in affects the quality of what is produced.

Respect the seasons of family life

- Babies, young children, and mothers can thrive on a relaxed, home-centered schedule. During the most intense season of family responsibilities, don't feel bad about reserving strength, time, and energy for your family.

TIME MAP	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Task focus	Laundry / bathrooms	Floors / baking	Bathrooms	Laundry / pay bills	Errands / kitchen	Home projects	Sabbath
Early morning	Morning prayer and devotional reading with breakfast and coffee. Get ready for the day.						
Mid-morning	Literature and writing; language arts, and Latin or other foreign language.			Do all errands in one day; shop from a list, either mom alone or with one child., if possible.	Home, yard, and car maintenance; outdoor play and activities, special rituals.	Church, family time, planning for the week, leisure	
Late morning	Math, logic, and entrepreneurship.						
Midday	Lunch prep, eating, nap or quiet time						
Early afternoon	History	Science	History				Science
Mid-afternoon	Art, music, creative pursuits, outdoor activities, free play						
Late afternoon	Quick pickup throughout the house; preparation for family dinner, eating, clean up						
Evening	Family reading with creative projects, personal reading, free time						

Please Write in Your Books!

Have you ever been told not to write in a book? Most people have, and doing so can feel subversive. However, annotating (taking notes in the books you read) is an interactive way to increase understanding and enjoy a work more deeply than if you simply skim through without thinking. Here are some suggestions for effective annotations.

Use a pencil for writing in your books, as it does not show through or distract from the story, and it can be erased if necessary. In college, I made notes with a pen, but discovered that most ballpoint inks bled through thin pages and were not acid free, which eventually leads to lasting damage.

You may annotate in margins, on the inside of book covers, or on the blank pages at the front and back of your text. Of course it's best to use an index card or piece of paper if you are using a library book, but it's not nearly as immediate and satisfactory as notes in the actual text. There are circumstances in which highlighting can be appropriate, but just realize that this will ruin the book for anyone else (especially visual learners), and you may find that even you cannot read it again without distraction.

A few ways to annotate

- Draw a vertical line beside significant lines or paragraphs.
- Underline important phrases or ideas.
- Draw a star beside any section you would like to memorize.
- Box words or short phrases that indicate a theme or thread you are following through the story.
- Use an arrow symbol or > to point to book titles or web addresses you would like to look up later.

Context: If the story or poem mentions a person, a piece of art, literature, or music, or a historic event, make a note in the margin and look up the item.

Questions: If you have a question about something in the text, write it in the margin or on a sticky note. Writing it down will help you recognize the answer if it later appears in the text. If it does not appear, the written question will remind you to do a bit more research.

Excerpted from excellence-in-literature.com/how-to-annotate/. You'll find a lot more reading and writing help there—it is the support site for the Excellence in Literature curriculum.

Model-Based Writing

How to Begin

Week 1: Absorb: Internalize the work through deep reading, note-taking, and in some cases, copying.

Week 2: Consider: Identify literary techniques and look for the underlying structure of the work. Look up unfamiliar words and usages, and if appropriate, compare with other works.

Week 3: Transform: In this step, you might change poetry to prose or prose to poetry, rewrite an ancient scene in a modern setting, reshape fiction into a feature article, a poem into a journal entry, or an essay thesis into an opposing argument.

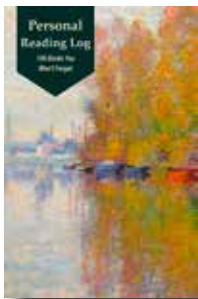
Week 4: Create: Use a form or technique you've learned in this unit to create your own work.

Model-Based Writing: I've written the book, but it's in the editing process. Meanwhile, there are quite a few lessons at Schoolhouse Teachers at <https://goo.gl/VIs8b6>.

The sole substitute for an experience which we have not ourselves lived through is art [and] literature . . . From man to man, as he completes his brief spell on Earth, art transfers the whole weight of an unfamiliar, lifelong experience with all its burdens, its colours, its sap of life; it recreates in the flesh an unknown experience and allows us to possess it as our own . . .

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, 1970 Nobel lecture

Personal Reading Log 100 Books You Won't Forget



The first thing you will notice about these little books (other than the pretty covers, of course) is that they are designed to record short entries for exactly 100 books. There are several reasons for this.

- 100 is a nice round number that is easy to track.
- 100 is not overwhelming for young readers, and they gain a great sense of accomplishment in filling out an entire log.

- As reading level, handwriting style, and tastes change, you aren't stuck with a log you started as a fourth grader. Your reading logs will grow up with you.
- There is space on the title page to record the log number and the dates it covers, so you can gradually build a small library of logs, tracking years worth of reading.



The *Personal Reading Log* provides just enough space for a rating and a few brief comments. This is because the purpose of a reading log is to record all the books you have read, and most books do not require a great deal of space. Now there are three beautiful covers to choose from, with painting by Monet, Canaletto, and Van Gogh. Keeping a reading log is a delight—I hope you enjoy using these pretty booklets!

Conference Special: 4 little booklets (planners & logs—your choice) for \$25

Interesting Writing Assignments

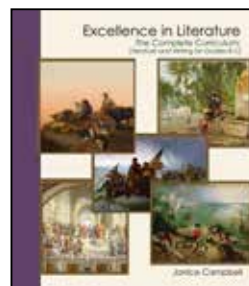
There are many ways to approach literary analysis, but the default method is often discussion or writing an analytical essay. These are useful methods—writing an analytical essay causes students to think critically, organize thoughts, sequence ideas, and compose an acceptable piece of writing. It is an excellent way to prepare for college writing or a debate team, and it is good for boosting general literacy and understanding.

However, discussions and essay writing are not the only tools for studying literature. The Excellence in Literature curriculum offers a variety of assignment types to help students approach the great books in a fresh way, but you don't have to wait for a curriculum in order to add creative assignments to literature study. Here are a few ideas you may want to try:

- **Illustrate** the poem or book through drawing, painting, collage, or other medium.
- Do a **chapter-by-chapter summary** of a book, with brief sketches that recall the main event of each chapter (as a bonus, you can make your illustrated summary into a mini-book).
- Compile a **timeline of events** that take place in the story. You may illustrate this or write it inside the back cover.
- Create a **character chart** inside the front cover of the book that includes each character's name, the page on which he/she first appeared, and role in the story.
- **Write a news or feature article** based on events in the book. Use correct journalistic format (instructions at Excellence-in-Literature.com—search for "journalism").
- **Summarize** the plot of a book in poetry or script for a play.
- **Map out a website** or social media presence for your main character, and create content in the character's voice.

Sometimes a creative writing assignment can be not only a welcome break in a heavy academic load, but also a way of developing new skills and understanding even more deeply than usual.

This article is adapted from a post on the *DoingWhatMatters.com* blog.



Excellence in Literature helps you teach college-prep classic literature to your teens, even if you don't know Virginia Woolf from Beowulf!

- Self directed for grades 8-12
- Study literature in historic/artistic context
- Week-by-week lesson plans
- Formats and models included

The EL curriculum is available one year at a time or all five years in a set (complete curriculum and ebook versions are available only from us).

www.ExcellenceinLiterature.com

Grammar Made Easy is Back!

Did you know that grammar can be simple? I fell in love with Connie Schenkelberg's *Grammar Made Easy: Writing a Step Above* when my boys were younger. We used this non-consumable, multi-level grammar book with all the boys at once. We talked through each of the scripted lessons, then they did the practice sentences. It was simple, intuitive, streamlined, and even a little bit fun! \$24.95 www.GrammarMadeEasy.com

Thirteenth-Century Rules for Study

Robert of Sorbonne, the founder of the famous Sorbonne College in Paris, gave six rules for study to his students. He wrote:

“The student who wishes to make progress ought to observe six essential rules.

1. **Be consistent:** He ought to consecrate a certain hour every day to the study of a determined subject, as St. Bernard counselled his monks in his letter to the Brothers of the Mont Dieu.
2. **Focus:** He ought to concentrate his attention upon what he reads and ought not to let it pass lightly. There is between reading and study, as St. Bernard says, the same difference as between a host and a guest, between a passing salutation exchanged in the street and an embrace prompted by an unalterable affection.
3. **Consider:** He ought to extract from the daily study one thought, some truth or other, and engrave it deeply upon his memory with special care. Seneca said “Cum multa percurreris in die, unum tibi elige quod illa die excoquas”—When you have run over many things in a day select one for yourself which you should digest well on that day.
4. **Summarize:** Write a résumé of it, for words which are not confided to writing fly as does the dust before the wind.
5. **Discuss:** Talk the matter over with your fellow-students, either in the regular recitation or in your familiar conversation. This exercise is even more profitable than study for it has as its result the clarifying of all doubts and the removing of all the obscurity that study may have left. Nothing is perfectly known unless it has been tried by the tooth of disputation.
6. **Seek wisdom and understanding:** Pray, for this is indeed one of the best ways of learning. St. Bernard teaches that study ought to touch the heart and that one should profit by it always by elevating the heart to God, without, however, interrupting the study.”
7. **Go outside and think:** Meditation is suitable not only for the master, but the good student ought also to go and take his promenade along the banks of the Seine, not to play there, but in order to repeat his lesson and meditate upon it.

Although this advice is couched in old-fashioned terms (he was writing in the thirteenth century, after all!), it is still good advice today. In fact, it is very similar to the study methods that were taught at my graduate school orientation, and virtually identical to the way I have always studied scripture and other important books. No matter what subject you choose to learn, these rules for study will help you learn deeply and remember long.

Robert de Sorbonne (or Sorbon) (9 October 1201 – 15 August 1274) was the French theologian who founded the Sorbonne college (now the University of Paris). In addition to his educational duties, he was also the chaplain of Louis IX of France.

Learning Styles/Strengths

Most people have a way they most easily take in information. These natural learning strengths can include auditory, visual, or kinesthetic preferences. As you choose curriculum, it can be helpful to keep these different ways of receiving and working with knowledge in mind. Look for curricula that will allow the student to use their learning preference while also cultivating other ways of learning. The 13th-century rules for learning provide a clear method of learning that includes balanced use of study methods that can be adapted to any student.

Auditory students prefer to learn by hearing. The auditory student will usually be the talker/singer/noisemaker in the family, is often musical, remembers things without taking notes, and tends to spell things as they sound. Auditory learners will almost always prefer to listen to a book than to read it, and will remember a great deal more about books they read if they're able to discuss them with someone.

Visual students prefer to learn by seeing. They'll often be early and avid readers, excellent spellers, and appreciative of art, nature, and other visual beauty. They will usually take good notes in lectures because they won't remember anything without the visual clue of their notes. A visual learner would usually rather read than be read to, and is often considered a model student.

Kinesthetic students prefer to learn by doing. These active students are usually on the move, have to have their hands on everything, and tend to be later readers than their visual and auditory counterparts. Spelling is often a major weakness, as they don't remember how a word looks and don't easily associate the sound of the whole word with individual letter sounds (they get better once they begin using the computer and can easily see and edit mistakes). Although they are capable of understanding and absorbing information at a level far above their reading level, they can struggle in institutional schooling and can end up labeled.

From My Commonplace Book

“Art, including juvenile literature, has the power to make any spot on earth the living center of the universe; and unlike science, which often gives us the illusion of understanding things we really do not understand, it helps us to know life in a way that still keeps before us the mystery of things. It enhances the sense of wonder. And wonder is respect for life. Art also stimulates the adventurousness and the playfulness that keep us moving in a lively way and that lead to useful discovery.”

(William Steig, 1970)

How to Keep a Commonplace Book

Commonplacing, or keeping a commonplace book, has been around for centuries, as people have always needed to remember things. Many famous people—Marcus Aurelius, Thomas Jefferson, Bill Gates—made a lifelong habit of keeping commonplace books filled with ideas from books they were reading. Their chosen quotes, like mine, reflect the growth of individual interests throughout their lives—almost an autobiography in quotes.

Starting a commonplace is simple. Get a notebook you like and keep it by your reading chair. As you read and discover ideas you'd like to think about or beautifully written though, copy them into your notebook, along with the author's name, book, and page number if any. Once you've established the habit of writing, you might want to add a keyword index, but first, just get into the habit of collecting great thoughts.

Rubric for High School Essays

Name: _____ Date: _____
Assignment: _____ Evaluator: _____

Ideas and Concepts

The essay contains a strong, easily identified thesis.
Interesting ideas and a compelling perspective hold the reader's attention.
Relevant anecdotes, appropriate quotes, and specific details support the writer's position and demonstrate understanding of the prompt.

Organization

The structure of the paper enhances the presentation of the thesis and supporting ideas.
Clear transitions move the reader easily from idea to idea.
Quotes and textual support are blended smoothly, with correct tenses and formatting.

Word Choice

Chosen words clearly convey the intended message.
The words used are precise, interesting, powerful, engaging, and natural.
The vocabulary is vivid and varied, though not necessarily exotic.

Sentence Fluency

Sentences flow easily, with graceful transitions.
Sentences have a pleasant, appropriate rhythm and cadence when read aloud.
Sentence structure is varied, with appropriate use of simple, complex, and compound sentences.

Voice

The writer speaks directly to the reader, using an appropriate tone and level of formality.
The writer's voice is individual, compelling, and engaging, providing a sense of the writer's personality.
The writer demonstrates awareness of and respect for the audience and purpose of the writing.

Mechanics

Standard writing conventions (spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, usage, paragraphing) are observed.
Citations are correctly formatted using the MLA standard.
Mechanical or typographical errors are few; only minor touch-ups needed.

Presentation

Essay is in college format: Times-New Roman (or equivalent) font, 12 pt., 1" margins.
Paper header with student, class, instructor, and date included.
Essay prompt included after header and before title.
Single space following all terminal punctuation.

Evaluation Scale

+ Indicates that your essay was exemplary in this area and exceeded assignment expectations.
= Indicates that your essay met assignment expectations in this area.
- Indicates that you should write down this skill as a goal area for improvement when you write your next paper.
* May also be evaluated on a scale of 1-5.

Rubric and evaluation scale excerpted from *Evaluate Writing the Easy Way* by Janice Campbell.

“*To know how to suggest is the art of teaching.*”

Henri-Frédéric Amiel

How to Use the Handbook for Writers to Grade Papers



It's easy to offer specific, constructive feedback with the Excellence in Literature *Handbook for Writers*. Information and instructions are written in numbered paragraphs, which allow you to direct the student to exactly the information he or she needs to fix an error or improve a skill.

For example, if your student is having difficulty with subject/verb agreement, look in the table of contents of the *Handbook*. Subject/verb agreement appears in section 1.8 on page 242. On the student's paper, note the section number so that the student can visit the handbook, read the paragraph, look at the examples, and see exactly how to correct the error. It is quick and simple, and much more helpful than just reminding the student to make the subject and verb agree.

Non-consumable; grade 7-adult. 420 pages, with two main parts. Part 1: a writing course with detailed instructions and examples for constructing arguments, outlines, and essays. Part 2 covers mechanics, including style and usage. This helpful reference book will guide your student through all sorts of high school and college writing!

\$10 off with purchase of any level of the Excellence in Literature curriculum!

Four-Year High School Plan

Freshman year

- 6 courses, 1 unit of each required subject
- Read for pleasure as much as possible
- Study Latin or learn Greek and Latin roots for vocabulary
- Establish solid study habits
- Practice note taking skills
- Begin developing test-taking skills (PSAT skill book can be useful)
- Think about personal aptitudes; read up on career options
- Start keeping a transcript (complete instructions in TranscriptsMadeEasy.com).

Sophomore year

- Same class balance as freshman year
- Continue or develop extracurricular activities that fit interests
- Schedule PSAT for the fall of junior year
- Begin researching college, trade school, or apprenticeship options and request info
- Use test-prep books to get ready for the SAT, CLT, or ACT
- Take CLEPs whenever ready
- May begin classes at a community college
- Update the transcript with semester and cumulative grades (FreeGPACalc.com)

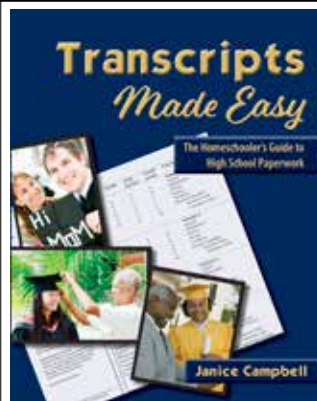
Junior year

- Six classes
- Take the PSAT in the fall (optional, but there are benefits)
- Focus on time-management & study skills
- Narrow down college and career options
- Spring: Take SAT/ACT/CLT and visit colleges
- May/June: Apply to two or more colleges
- Update the transcript with semester and cumulative grades

Senior year

- Six classes
- Scholarship search/essays/applications
- Take SAT Subject Exams, AP, CLEP exams
- Retake SAT, CLT, or ACT if desired
- Continue good study habits and extracurricular activities
- Finalize the transcript with semester and cumulative grades
- Provide support and necessary information as your student makes a final decision about college, vocational school, apprenticeships, entrepreneurship, a gap year, military, or other options.

Excerpted from *Get a Jump Start on College: A Practical Guide for Teens* by Janice Campbell



Transcripts Made Easy

New 4th edition!

This classic guide to homeschool paperwork has been revised and updated, and now it's even better. You'll learn all you need to know about records, grades, credits, GPA, and more.

If you'd rather spend time with people than with paperwork, this book is for you.

TranscriptsMadeEasy.com

\$24.95

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E1: Introduction to Literature

E2: Literature and Composition

E3: American Literature

E4: British Literature

E5: World Literature

<p>Module 1: Short Stories by- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sarah Orne Jewett: A White Heron • Edgar Allan Poe: The Purloined Letter (This one is not scary, if you're concerned about that.) • Guy de Maupassant: The Diamond Necklace • O. Henry: The Ransom of Red Chief • Eudora Welty: A Worn Path • James Thurber: The Secret Life of Walter Mitty </p>	<p>Module 1: <i>Robinson Crusoe</i> by Daniel DeFoe Honors: <i>The Swiss Family Robinson</i> by Johann David Wyss or <i>The Further Adventures of Robinson Crusoe</i> by Daniel DeFoe Optional: The book of <i>Jonah</i> (any translation) and <i>Grace Abounding to the Chiefest of Sinners</i> by John Bunyan Module 2: <i>Walden</i> by Henry David Thoreau Honors: "Civil Disobedience" by Henry David Thoreau and "Self-Reliance" by Ralph Waldo Emerson Module 3: <i>The Count of Monte Cristo</i> by Alexandre Dumas Honors: <i>The Man in the Iron Mask</i> or <i>The Three Musketeers</i> by Dumas Module 4: <i>The Heart of Darkness</i> by Joseph Conrad Honors: <i>Manalive</i> by G. K. Chesterton Module 5: <i>Till We Have Faces</i> by C.S. Lewis Honors: <i>The Screwtape Letters</i> by C. S. 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Eliot Module 6: <i>Treasure Island</i> by Robert Louis Stevenson Honors: <i>Kidnapped</i> by Robert Louis Stevenson Module 7: <i>Animal Farm</i> by George Orwell Honors: <i>1984</i> by George Orwell Module 8: <i>The Tempest</i> by William Shakespeare Honors: <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> by William Shakespeare Module 9: <i>Gulliver's Travels</i> by Jonathan Swift Honors: <i>The Pilgrim's Progress</i> by John Bunyan</p>	<p>Module 1: <i>Robinson Crusoe</i> by Daniel DeFoe Honors: <i>The Swiss Family Robinson</i> by Johann David Wyss or <i>The Further Adventures of Robinson Crusoe</i> by Daniel DeFoe Optional: The book of <i>Jonah</i> (any translation) and <i>Grace Abounding to the Chiefest of Sinners</i> by John Bunyan Module 2: <i>Walden</i> by Henry David Thoreau Honors: "Civil Disobedience" by Henry David Thoreau and "Self-Reliance" by Ralph Waldo Emerson Module 3: <i>The Count of Monte Cristo</i> by Alexandre Dumas Honors: <i>The Man in the Iron Mask</i> or <i>The Three Musketeers</i> by Dumas Module 4: <i>The Heart of Darkness</i> by Joseph Conrad Honors: <i>Manalive</i> by G. 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