“In the early days of a child’s life it makes little difference whether we educate with a notion of filling a receptacle, inscribing a tablet, moulding plastic matter, or nourishing a life, but as a child grows we shall perceive that only those ideas which have fed his life are taken into his being; all the rest is cast away or is, like sawdust in the system, an impediment and an injury.”

- Charlotte Mason
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POSTMASTER send address changes to: Home Educator’s Tutor, 1735 W State of Franklin Rd., Suite 5 #256, Johnson City, TN 37604.
It is official, a year’s worth of issues are now in your hands. As the first issue was free, no subscriptions will end until after the next issue, term 1 2006/7. We are developing the renewal reminders.

I was pulled over the other day by a friendly police officer. I was confused as to what the trouble had been. My license had expired almost two months prior! I was a little surprised that a year had passed so quickly. I did learn in the state of Tennessee you may or may not receive a reminder in the mail about renewing your license. I realized we needed to be a little on top of this with the magazine and let you know what to expect. We will send out one reminder around the time renewals are due. The notice will come once as a simple reminder if you would like to continue receiving the HETutor.

We would love to include drawings from your children throughout the year in the HETutor. If your children are interested check out page 30 to see the categories and find out more on how to enter a drawing with every sketch sent in.

A new shopping cart is up on the website. It is still linked to PayPal. The shopping cart makes ordering easier. With back issues which can be purchased as well as a subscription the shopping cart is more clear so you and I know exactly what you are ordering.

If you have not heard yet we have begun a yahoo group for all who would like to discuss ideas, share resources, ask questions, and the like about the Home Educator’s Tutor. It has also become a place where those thinking about subscribing find out more about the HETutor. to subscribe send an email message to: hetutor-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

We ask God’s blessings upon your family and the new school year.

Thank you,
JR and Paula Augustine
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“For we let our young men and women go out unarmed in a day when armor was never so necessary. By teaching them to read, we have left them at the mercy of the printed word. By the invention of the film and the radio, we have made certain that no aversion to reading shall secure them from the incessant battery of words, words, words. They do not know what the words mean; they do not know how to ward them off or blunt their edge or fling them back; they are a prey to word in their emotions instead of being the masters of them in their intellects... We have lost the tools of learning, and in their absence can only make a botched and piecemeal job of it.

- Dorothy L. Sayers, “The Lost Tools of Learning”
Outdoors

What a marvel the night sky looks. It can make us feel so small. A grander vision envelopes our earth.

The book Star Stories For Little Folks I realize are more for our northern hemisphere viewers. I did try to find something for our southern hemisphere viewers, but I was not able to find stories such as this.
“Now, this is called the Winged Horse,” went on the doctor.

“I don’t see how it can be,” said Helen.

“Well, he is on his back, and his feet are up in the air—up in the sky, I should say.”

“I see what might be called feet,” replied Helen.

“It isn’t necessary to pick them out,” said Dr. Lorry. “Just look inside the square before I come again, and count every star you can see within the square.”

“Oh, that will be fun!” agreed Helen.

“Now, just below the Great Square is a perfect triangle, called the Triangle.”

“I see that, and it looks like its name,” said Helen.

“Just below that is A-ri-es, the Ram, made up of three stars. Although Aries is quite small, it is very important. You must be sure to remember it. The right-hand star is the

first double star ever seen. Through a telescope it looks like two stars close together. Now, do you think you can remember three constellations in one night?”

“Of course,” laughed Helen.

---

**STAR STORIES FOR LITTLE FOLKS**

*by Gertrude Chandler Warner*

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XV. CASSIOPEIA’S CHAIR

*Look for the Chair late in October*

“For this constellation we would like those steamer chairs you had at the beach,” said Dr. Lorry. “Come, we’ll sit in the front seat of my car and lean back.”

“How pretty the Milky Way is tonight!” said Helen.

“Yes, and Cass-ui-o-pe’-ia’s Chair lies almost wholly in the Milky Way. We are facing north. The chair is half-way between the Great Square and the Big Dipper, and looks like a W upside down. See its picture first. You see I have lettered the stars a, b, c, d, and e. The back is formed by a, b and c, the seat by c and d, and the front leg by d and e. Cassiopeia herself is nowhere to be seen.”
XI. CYGNUS, THE SWAN

The Swan is visible early in July

To tell the truth, the hotel at the beach was rather lonesome, when Helen and her mother went down in June. But after a hot week or two, more people came. One evening, just before Helen went up-stairs to bed, she sat with her elbows on the piazza railing, looking at the sky.

"See, mother! there is Lyra 'way up high!"

"And what do you know about Lyra?" asked a puzzled voice beside her. She turned to see a young man, who had arrived that day, in the next chair.

"She is learning the constellations," explained Helen's mother. "And we're trying to

pick out a new one to send home to her teacher to find out its name."

"Good!" said the young man, heartily.

"Does she know Cygnus, the Swan?"

"Oh, no!" said Helen. "Wouldn't it be great fun if I could really learn one and surprise the doctor! Do you know about the stars?"

"Just a little," said the young man. "I can show you the Swan. Do you see where the Milky Way divides itself? See a large perfect cross at the left?"

"With one brighter star at the top?" said Helen.

"Yes, that is Deneb, the Swan's tail. Do you know what the Milky Way is?"

"It is thousands of faint stars," said Helen, timidly.

"Yes, and there is a place in the Swan where these faint stars stop. See, just left of the middle star? That is the Coal Sack. Then just below Cygnus is a tiny diamond of four stars. That is Delphinus, the Dolphin."

"Isn't that cunning?" said Helen. "Won't the doctor be surprised? Thank you! So much for telling me, and will you show me another sometime?"

"Surely," said the young man, smiling to himself.
XII. SCORPIO

Look for this star in July

"Dear Dr. Lorry," wrote Helen, "I knew you'd be awfully surprised to hear that I had found out the name of the Swan. And the way we found out was this. A man here offered to teach me, and mother happened to find out that he really is a Star Professor at the big college in New York!"

"He takes a lot of pains with me. Last night he took our steamer chairs off the piazza down to the sand. It is so much more comfortable, and you can see so much better leaning back. It doesn't make your neck ache, either.

"He taught us the Scorpion this time. I really think it looks like a Scorpion, with its tail curled over its back. He says a good way to find Scorpio is to face south, and the handle of the Dipper points to it. But if you face south, you can hardly miss it, as An-ta-rex, the Scorpion's heart, is so very bright and red. When I first looked at Antares, it looked red, but after the professor called my attention to its color, I saw it was bright green, too. It is a funny color, but very pretty.

"My favorite stars so far are Regulus, Vega, Antares and Rigel. You didn't expect I'd remember Rigel, did you?"

"How do you like me for a teacher?"

"Your little friend,

"Helen."

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XIII. SAGITTARIUS, THE ARCHER

Wait until the last of August for this

"I think the Archer is up high enough tonight for us to study," said Helen's star friend, settling the three steamer chairs in a row on the sand.

"Just at the left of the Scorpion, you will see a figure that looks like the Big Dipper upside down."

"Oh! almost exactly like the Dipper?" cried Helen.

"That is it," agreed the young man. "It is called the Milk Dipper. The other must be a water dipper. Now, this is one part of Sag-it-ta'-ri-us. The other part represents a bow
and arrow. The three stars in a curved line make the bow.”

“And doesn’t the star at the right make the arrow?” asked Helen.

“Exactly right!” exclaimed Helen’s teacher.

“Perhaps you had better letter the bow, a, b, c, when you send the drawing to Dr. Lorry, and the tip of the arrow, d.”

Just then a tiny star shot rapidly across the sky.

“A shooting star!” cried Helen. “Did you see it?”

“Yes,” said her friend. “You see this one was so bright, it left a faint streak behind it. I’m glad we happened to see it.”

“Dr. Lorry said I would see one if I watched long enough.”

“That is a wonderful sight,” said Helen’s mother. “I have learned as much as Helen during these lessons, and I am sorry that we have to go home this week.”

“And I shall be sorry to lose such an apt pupil,” said the professor, with a low bow.

Stars

Bright stars, light stars
Shining-in-the-night stars,
Little twinkly, winky stars,
Deep in the sky.

Yellow stars, red stars,
Shine-when-I’m-in-bed stars,
Oh how many blinky stars,
Far, far away!
STARS

Ah! why, because the dazzling sun
Restored our Earth to joy,
Have you departed, every one,
And left a desert sky?

All through the night, your glorious eyes
Were gazing down in mine,
And, with a full heart's thankful sighs,
I blessed that watch divine.

I was at peace, and drank your beams
As they were life to me;
And revelled in my changeful dreams,
Like petrel on the sea.

Thought followed thought, star followed star,
Through boundless regions, on;
While one sweet influence, near and far,
Thrilled through, and proved us one!

Why did the morning dawn to break
So great, so pure, a spell;
And scorch with fire the tranquil cheek,
Where your cool radiance fell?

Blood-red, he rose, and, arrow-straight,
His fierce beams struck my brow;
The soul of nature sprang, elate,
But mine sank sad and low!

My lids closed down, yet through their veil
I saw him, blazing, still,
And steep in gold the misty dale,
And flash upon the hill.

I turned me to the pillow, then,
To call back night, and see
Your worlds of solemn light, again,
Throb with my heart, and me!

It would not do--the pillow glowed,
And glowed both roof and floor;
And birds sang loudly in the wood,
And fresh winds shook the door;

The curtains waved, the wakened flies
Were murmuring round my room,
Imprisoned there, till I should rise,
And give them leave to roam.

Oh, stars, and dreams, and gentle night;
Oh, night and stars, return!
And hide me from the hostile light
That does not warm, but burn;

That drains the blood of suffering men;
Drinks tears, instead of dew;
Let me sleep through his blinding reign,
And only wake with you!

-Emilt Bronte

THE LIGHT OF STARS

The night is come, but not too soon;
And sinking silently,
All silently, the little moon
Drops down behind the sky.
There is no light in earth or heaven
But the cold light of stars;
And the first watch of night is given
To the red planet Mars.
Is it the tender star of love?
The star of love and dreams?
Oh no! from the blue tent above
A hero's armor gleams.
And earnest thoughts within me rise,
When I behold afar,
Suspended in the evening skies,
The shield of that red star
O star of strength! I see thee stand
And smile upon my pain;
Thou beckonest with thy mailèd hand,
And I am strong again.
Within my breast there is no light
But the cold light of stars;
I give the first watch of the night
To the red planet Mars.
The star of the unconquered will,
He rises in my breast,
Serene, and resolute, and still,
And calm, and self-possessed
And thou, too, whosoever thou art,
That readest this brief psalm,
As one by one thy hopes depart,
Be resolute and calm.
Oh, fear not in a world like this,
And thou shalt know erelong,
Know how sublime a thing it is
To suffer and be strong.

-Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
CANIS MAJOR

The great Overdog,
That heavenly beast
With a star in one eye,
Gives a leap in the east.

He dances upright
All the way to the west,
And never once drops
On his forefeet to rest.

I'm a poor underdog,
But to-night I will bark
With the great Overdog
That romps through the dark.

-Robert Frost, 1928

THE MOON'S THE NORTH WINDS

COOKY

The Moon's the North Wind's Cooky,
He bites it day by day,
Until there's but a rim of scraps
That crumble all away.
The South wind is a baker,
He kneads clouds in his den,
And bakes a crisp new moon – that greedy
North... Wind... eats... again!

-Vachel Lindsay

BRIGHT STAR

Bright Star! would I were steadfast as thou art-
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night,
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like Nature's patient, sleepless Eremite,
The moving waters at their priest-like task
Of pure ablution round Earth's human shores,
Or gazing on the new soft fallen mask
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors -

No - yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,
Pillowed upon my fair love's ripening breast
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
Half-passionless, and so swoon on to death.

-John Keats

THE GALAXY

Torrent of light and river of the air,
Along whose bed the glimmering stars are seen
Like gold and silver sands in some ravine
Where mountain streams have left their channels bare!
The Spaniard sees in thee the pathway, where
His patron saint descended in the sheen
Of his celestial armor, on serene
And quiet nights, when all the heavens were fair.
Not this I see, nor yet the ancient fable
Of Phaeton's wild course, that scorched the skies
Where'er the hoofs of his hot coursers trod;
But the white drift of worlds o'er chasms of sable,
The star-dust that is whirled aloft and flies
From the invisible chariot-wheels of God.

-Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

THE WHITE WINDOW

The Moon comes every night to peep
Through the window where I lie:
But I pretend to be asleep;
And watch the Moon go slowly by,
-- and she never makes a sound!

She stands and stares! And then she goes
To the house that's next to me,
Stealing by on tippy-toes;
To peep at folk asleep maybe
-- And she never makes a sound!

-James Stephens
Games

Jackstones
This game of quick hands is attributed to the North American Indians, the Apaches.

Items needed: five stones about the size of jacks or five jacks.

Scatter four of the stones around as one would with jacks. Place one hand palm side down on the ground. With the other hand throw the last stone in the air, pick up one stone from the ground and place it on the knuckle of the hand on the ground, then catch the stone before it touches the ground. Jacks and even a jack ball may be safer than throwing stones in the air.

Kolowis Awithlkanannai or Fighting Serpents
Many "board" type games can be played outside using chalk on concrete to mark the playing surface, or drawing the board in the sand or dirt. This strategy game for two players is from the Native American tribe, Zuni.

Items needed: 23 markers for each player, these can be rocks, marbles, or checker pieces. These markers do need to be similar enough for each player to distinguish which is theirs.

Draw the diagram shown on the left with chalk or a stick in the dirt. Place the 23 markers as shown on the drawing board making sure there is three spots left open. The object is to take all your opponents pieces off the board. The play begins by moving the markers to one of the three open points on the playing board. The player loses his marker when his opponent is able to jump it. Successive jumps are permitted in a turn and no one may jump a piece on either of the curved ends. Play continues until one player captures all his opponents pieces.

Tetepaulalowaawaa or Rolling Game
This game takes as much skill as skeet ball. It will need to be played on dirt so little pits can be dug for the marbles to roll into. This game would work great on a flat hardened beach area. The idea of the game is from the Native America tribe, the Shawnee.

Items needed: marbles and a long playing area of dirt.

This game can be played individually or in teams. The goal is to score the most points. Think of a bowling alley when setting up this game. On one end of the long playing surface make 7-14 pits for the marbles to fall into. These pits do not need to be placed in any special order. Give each pit a number of points, maybe the hardest pit to make could be 10 points while those around it only 4 points. This is agreed upon before play making it easy enough to remember or mark the pits with their points. Players begin by rolling their marble down the track to the pits. If the marble drops into a pit, points are collected.

This game will be different each time it is played and different rules can be used each time. A wooden crochet ball or boche ball could be used as well with a larger playing area.

Coin Toss
This game is for one to as many want to take the challenge. According to early Spanish settlers this was an official competition held among Aztec warriors. This is a game of skill.

Items needed: pennies and a playing field.

Select a post or other object about 2-3 feet off the ground which is flat enough to hold one of the pennies. (To hold an official competition kids may want to fashion a special playing post) Draw a line in the dirt, or place a rock on the ground to place the throwing line, about 3-6 feet away from the post. While standing at the line, without crossing it, players take turns throwing their penny at the penny on the post trying to knock it off.

To make this game more difficult draw a circle around the base of the post, 2-3 feet in diameter. The players now must knock the penny off the post, but it must land outside this circle around the post.
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Titus

Leading and Teaching in the Church

From Paul a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ
To Titus

Titus, you must finish the work in Crete. Leaders need to be appointed for the churches. The leader or elder must love what is good and holy and be disciplined. He must be a husband of only one wife and his children need to believe and not be disobedient.

The elder who is obedient is a person we can trust to teach others and correct those people who are teaching against God’s word. Many people are trying to teach things that should not be taught. They pretend to know God, but are not obedient to God’s word.

You will also need to teach. Teach the older men to have self-control and how to show their faith, love and patience. Teach the older women to not gossip or get drunk, but be respectful in how they live. The older women will be able to teach the younger women to be pure and holy. Teach the young men to have self-control. Be an example for them by doing only what is good and right. Teach slaves to obey their masters. Remind everyone to be good and obedient, to be kind and at peace.

We were once disobedient, foolish and were active in many sins. God changed us. He cleansed us and made us as new people. He loves us enough to give us life with Him, even if we do not deserve it. God did this for us and He gives this gift to everyone. It does not matter whom your parents or other relatives were. Do not argue about these things or about the law given to Moses.

Please try and meet me at Nicopolis this winter after Artemas or Tychicus comes. Make sure Zenas and Apollos have everything they need when it is time for them to leave. Everyone with me sends their greetings.

“He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.” Titus 3:5
From Paul an apostle of Christ Jesus  
To the church at Ephesus  

I pray that God will give you his grace and power. Praise God for His blessings and forgiveness! I also thank God for you. I pray you will get to know God better and know the hope we have to be in heaven with Him.

You were sinful people and only had death to look forward to. God gave us life again. Because of what Jesus has done we can now live forever with God in heaven. We are created to do only good. It does not matter if you are a Gentile or an Israelite. You are now one in God's family.

I am in prison for preaching to Gentiles. God has revealed to me to share the gospel with the Gentiles. I am a servant to God's truth. Even though I was a very sinful man God still has given me His grace. Do not feel bad because I am in prison for sharing the Gospel with you. I pray God will give you strength, He will give you the power and knowledge of His love.

I ask you to live how God would want. Be a servant, be patient and love one another. Try to stay together with God's Spirit and our faith. God has some people to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists and some to be teachers. These people help Christians grow and prepare them for being servants. Each of us must do our work so the whole church can grow and build in love.

Each of you must speak the truth and be a new person, not the sinful person you were before. If you used to steal, stop and do something useful with your hands. Be kind to each other, talking with kind and helpful words. Be very careful how you live. By living how Jesus taught we are the light of Jesus. Have nothing to do with sinful ways. Always be thankful and joyful singing to the Lord.

Submit, or put others first. This shows honor to Christ. Wives submit to husbands and husbands love your wives. Children obey your parents and parents teach your children about Jesus as you raise them properly. Slaves obey your masters and serve with all your heart. Masters treat your slaves with respect.

Be strong with God's power. Put on His armor so you are protected from Satan. Stand firm with the belt of truth around your waist, the breastplate of God's justice, and with your feet ready at all times. Take the shield of faith, the helmet of God's safety and the sword of Jesus Spirit. Pray always for other Christians and for me as I teach others.

Tychicus will tell you anything else you would like to know about me. I pray for God's peace, love and His grace to everyone.

"Praise be to God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who blessed us in heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ." Ephesians 1:3
Questions and Answers for Ephesians:

1. Who was Tychicus?
   Tychicus was one of Paul’s close friends. He was from “the province of Asia,” so he might have been from Ephesus. Paul wrote the letter to the Ephesians while he was in prison and had Tychicus take it to the church in Ephesus. Tychicus must have been a great Christian. Paul sent him so he could encourage the believers in Ephesus.

2. What is a gentile?
   A gentile is anyone who isn’t Jewish. In the Old Testament the Israelites carried on business with gentiles, recruited gentiles into their army, and even married gentiles. However, after years of persecution when the Israelites were in captivity they did not like the gentiles. You can imagine the tense relationship Jewish Christians had with gentile Christians at the time Paul is writing the letter to the Ephesians.

Questions and Answers for Titus:

1. What work was Titus doing in Crete?
   Paul sent Titus to organize the churches of Crete and put a stop to their sinful behavior. Other people could see they were not acting good. Titus was supposed to appoint elders and speak out strongly against a specific sin of the Cretian Christians, the habit of spreading myths.

2. How can I practice self-control?
   Self-control is not always giving in to your wants and desires. This is very difficult when you want to do something your parents have said not to do. Obeying your parents, even when you don’t want to, is practicing self-control. When you don’t want to obey your parents but do it anyway you should be proud of yourself because you’re practicing self-control.
Psalm 98

1 Sing a new song to the LORD! He has worked miracles, and with his own powerful arm, he has won the victory.

2 The LORD has shown the nations that he has the power to save and to bring justice.

3 God has been faithful in his love for Israel, and his saving power is seen everywhere on earth.

4 Tell everyone on this earth to sing happy songs in praise of the LORD.

5 Make music for him on harps. Play beautiful melodies!

6 Sound the trumpets and horns and celebrate with joyful songs for our LORD and King!

7 Command the ocean to roar with all of its creatures, and the earth to shout with all of its people.

8 Order the rivers to clap their hands, and all of the hills to sing together.

9 Let them worship the LORD! He is coming to judge everyone on the earth, and he will be honest and fair.
Psalm 100

1 Shout praises to the LORD, everyone on this earth.
2 Be joyful and sing as you come in to worship the LORD!
3 You know the LORD is God! He created us, and we belong to him; we are his people, the sheep in his pasture.
4 Be thankful and praise the LORD as you enter his temple.
5 The LORD is good! His love and faithfulness will last forever.

Psalm 98 was probably written to celebrate the deliverance of the Israelites from captivity in Babylon, but it was also intended, in a prophetic sense to forshadow Jesus Christ's redemption of the world.

Psalm 100 was likely also composed after the release from Babylonian captivity. In addition to praising God for the gift of freedom given to the people, it also reminds the people to praise and worship God as their response to him.
Psalmus 98

1 psalmus David cantate Domino canticum novum quoniam mirabilia fecit salvavit sibi dextera eius et brachium sanctum eius

2 notum fecit Dominus salutare suum in conspectu gentium revelavit iustitiam suam

3 recordatus est misericordiae suae et veritatem suam domui Israhel viderunt omnes termini terrae salutare Dei nostri

4 iubilate Domino omnis terra cantate et exultate et psallite

5 psallite Domino in cithara in cithara et voce psalmi

6 in tubis ductilibus et voce tubae corneae iubilate in conspectu regis Domini

7 moveatur mare et plenitudo eius orbis terrarum et qui habitant in eo

8 flumina plaudent manu simul montes exultabunt

9 a conspectu Domini quoniam venit iudicare terram iudicabit orbem terrarum in iustitia et populos in aequitate
for Further Study

Psalmus 100

1 psalmus in confessione iubilate Domino omnis terra

2 servite Domino in laetitia introite in conspectu eius in exultatione

3 scitote quoniam Dominus ipse est Deus ipse fecit nos et non ipsi nos populus eius et oves pascuae eius

4 introite portas eius in confessione atria eius in hymnis confitemini illi laudate nomen eius

5 quoniam suavis Dominus in aeternum misericordia eius et usque in generationem et generationem veritas eius
Start a **Family Read-Aloud Night** This Summer

- **Fiction:**
  - *National Velvet* by Enid Bagnold
    The story of the famous piebald and the girl who rode him, for horse lovers everywhere.
  
  - *Schoolroom in the Parlor* by Rebecca Caudill
    While reading this book we even “did some of the lessons” as we followed along with the wonderful story of siblings homeschooling one another.
  
  - *Little Lord Fauntleroy* by Frances Hodgson Burnett
    We see the world through the eyes of a little boy with a big heart and the transformation of those who are touched by his actions.
  
  - *Hitty, Her first Hundred Years* by Rachel Field
    The life of a doll may seem carefree, but if an old doll could talk this is what stories she may have to share.
  
  - *Gone Away Lake* by Elizabeth Enright
    “Mom, I wanted that story to keep going!” was one of my daughter’s remarks as we finished listening to the story of a summer at Gone Away Lake.
  
  - *The Princess and the Goblin* by George MacDonald
    Mr. MacDonald has many wonderful princess books and this one we finished reading last fall even though it was a little scary.
  
  - *The Complete Peterkin Papers* by Lucretia Hale
    Follow the experiences of a funny, lighthearted family with a little different perspective on how life works.

- **Biographies**
  - *Benjamin West and His Cat Grimalken* by Marguerite Henry
    Benjamin West was one of the first noted American artists and his cat helped him in a very ingenious way!
  
  - *Carry on Mr. Bodwitch* by Jean Lee Latham
    Nat was a mathematician, an astronomer, and most importantly a self-motivated learner that let nothing stand in his way to acquire whatever knowledge he wanted.
  
  - *Ink on His Fingers* by Louise A. Vernon
    Everyone knows the name of Johann Gutenberg, but what of the others who worked with him to print the first Bible, such as his apprentice, Hans Dunne.
  
  - *Nothing is Impossible: The Story of Beatrix Potter* by Dorothy Aldis
    See the world anew along with Beatrix as a child. We loved going through *Beatrix Potter’s Art* while reading this book, Nothing is impossible.
  
  - *The Life of J.E.B. Stuart* by Mary L Williamson
    Continue your study of the Civil war while reading about Mr. Stuart’s life.
  
  - *Mr. Revere and I* by Robert Lawson
    A creative story of the life of a Mr. Revere; through the eyes of his horse. This is a very fun read-aloud.
Looking Forward
Outdoors

Fall: Flowers
Winter: Mammals
Spring: Amphibians

The Outdoors section will continue to include games for outside play, nature notes and ideas for exploring the nature topic, and stories for the family to enjoy on the nature topic. More sketches and photos are planned for including this year.

We are looking forward to publishing sketches from students. Look on page 30 for more information on how to submit sketches and enter into a drawing with a chance of being one of five winners. We will also continue to give out a free subscription for an accepted games article. Submit the article via snail mail or email (pjaugustine@pyxispublishing.com) and we’ll let you know on acceptance.

Fall: Mozart  Benjamin West
Winter: Schubert  Jean Corot
Spring: Beethoven  John Constable

Listed are the composers and artists for each term. We will have the same format complete with the CD and full page art prints. We will begin listing the contents of the CD on the back page with the CD as well as on the CD. This was a great suggestion from one of our readers.

The folk songs will focus on American heritage this year. We will continue each year to focus on a different heritage. If you would like to suggest a heritage, please feel free to let us know what heritage you would like to study.

We will continue to give out free subscriptions for accepted articles with instructions for handcrafts. Submit these articles via snail mail or email (pjaugustine@pyxispublishing.com) and we’ll let you know on acceptance.
Character

Fall: Diligence

Winter: Patience

Spring: Truthfulness

The Character section will have the Bible readings. The Old Testament readings will begin in Genesis and the New Testament readings will be from Luke. One consideration would be to plan to use Ruth Beechick’s books, Adam and His Kin and Genesis: Finding our Roots, along with the Bible study. The older student could continue their Biblical studies with an Old Testament history book and a Bible handbook such as Hodder’s or a Bible Commentary such as Matthew Henry’s.

Memory verses will continue in KJV as well as Latin, Greek, French, and Spanish to aid in your foreign language studies!

Plutarch studies will include Themistocles, Pabius, and Lysander. Character stories will also continue for the younger students.

Literature

The literature section will feature poetry from a variety of poets. We will also include a little more information on the poet’s life than was included in last years’ issues.

The tales and myths will begin with Andrew Lang’s Tales of Troy and Greece for the younger students, the two older age groups will continue with Hawthorne’s Tanglewood Tales and the Keary sisters’ Tales of Asgard. The original sources will focus on ancient Greece and Rome.

This year we will include with the original sources instructions for clearly reading aloud, beginning study in rhetoric. We are also trying to get the Logic study back in place. It is difficult to find a study which is out of print and does not build on itself so much as Carrol’s study does.

Shakespeare study will include two comedies and one tragedy: As You Like It, Romeo and Juliet, and Taming the Shrew.
One of the most asked questions I received this year is, “How do you use the Home Educator’s Tutor?”

The Home Educator’s Tutor is not intended to be used in any particular way or with any certain sequence. It is simply a variety of topics, above and beyond the regular curriculum, which aid the parent/teacher in giving the student a generous education.

3 Easy Steps?

It may seem a little overwhelming to get started. Browsing through the publication one may wonder how to schedule all this in. Personally, I would suggest starting slowly. Maybe this simple three step method would be a great beginning point.

1. Look over the contents page and ask yourself, what would be the first area of study you would add?
   2. Go to that page. Do not concern yourself yet with the other offerings the magazine has, pass it by you can get to that later. Earmark, circle (yes, I would highly suggest writing in this magazine), or use little sticky notes on the page(s) you would use.
   3. Add a 5-15 minute time slot to your scheduled day and mark it HETutor. During that time decide how to best go through the material chosen.

If music appreciation is the area chosen here may be a sample daily schedule that could be followed. The first day listen to one piece or section of the piece on the CD and have the kids make a poster with the name of the piece and composer's name to hang on the wall, the next day read a little of the biography and ask for narrations, the third day listen to the music again and make a game of memorizing the name of the piece or spelling the composer’s name, finally take a fourth day to tell about the music either through drawing a picture or describing the instruments or the feel of the piece with movement.

Repeat this same schedule during the next weeks until all the material is used. In time, when the biography reading is finished, take a day and add the composer to a timeline, do some further study by researching the internet or library for more information. Any further study beyond what is in the magazine can be sought out when time allows.
More Ideas

As each homeschool is very different from another the main purpose of the magazine is to offer quality educational material toward a generous curriculum. The material is complete enough to stand alone, yet could easily be used as a jumping off point.

Here are some ideas suggested by homeschooling parents using the Home Educator’s Tutor:

• Take it along while traveling. The Bible, a notebook, a pencil, and the HETutor are easy to carry along while traveling in the vehicle. This can offer a quick alternative to get some schoolwork accomplished when life happens.
• Plan more picnics and family outings. The poetry section and any of the story readings make great short read-alouds while on a picnic.
• Gathering more help. Dad or grandparents could be given the opportunity to use the HETutor with the kids. The material is in one place and easy to access for family and friends who would love to help out teaching the kids, but are not able to spend the time preparing lesson work.

Here are more ideas for using the publication as a beginning point of reference:

• Read the Bible selections then use more study reference books, such as fictional living books, Bible atlas, Bible reference books, sermons, and devotionals.
• Research more about the people mentioned throughout the magazine. The timeline in the back of each issue is a great list to begin with. Each year the artists, or composers, or poets will come from one time period, the Plutarch study will always be from ancient Greece and Rome, the folk songs will come from one heritage. Biographies could be read or use the time period as a second or third history study if your homeschool is modeled more closely to Charlotte Mason’s ideas.
• Narration, copywork, dictation, and recitation. Any or all of these could be implemented with the materials in each issue. Bible verses and famous Shakespeare quotes are listed especially for copywork. Dictation and narrations could be taken from any of the stories.

A Yahoo Group has been started for users of the HETutor to share their experiences, ask questions, and glean ideas from each other so each of you can effectively put to use this magazine in your homeschool. Please feel free to join, and let others know who are considering joining they may like to ask some questions as well. To join send an email to: hetutor-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
Submit a pencil or ink sketch for publication and have your name entered in a drawing to win prizes.

Here’s all you need to do:

1. Get out your pencil or pen and sketch something from any of the categories listed on the right.
2. Write your name, age, and state on the back of the page.
3. Fill out a 3.5” X 5” index card with your full name, parent(s) name, address, phone number, and email.
4. Complete as many sketches as you would like. Each new sketch is another entry in the drawing, be sure to include an index card for each sketch.
5. Mail entry(ies) to: 1735 W. State of Franklin Rd. Suite 5 #256; Johnson City, TN 37604

Remember: We are looking for a variety of artistic ability for publication.

Categories:

- Flowers
- Amphibians
- Romeo and Juliet
- As You Like It
- Mammals
- Taming of the Shrew
- Genesis: Creation
- Genesis: Eden
- Genesis: Adam and Eve
- Genesis: Noah
- Mozart
- Schubert
- Musical Instruments
- Artist’s Paint set
- Beethoven

Drawing Rules:

1. How to enter: No purchase necessary. No skill required. Each successfully submitted sketch will be an entry for the drawing. More than one entry in an envelope will be accepted.
2. Successfully Submitted Sketch: The sketch must be on white unlined paper, no photocopies please. On the back upper right corner please write the first name or first initial of your name (this is how your name would appear if we would use the sketch for publication), age, and TN. Along with each sketch submit a 3 ½” x 5” card with the following information: Full Name, Parents Name, Address, Phone Number, and email.
3. Privacy Policy: Your privacy is respected and no information will be shared. If a sketch is used for publication the name as printed will appear.
4. Prize: Five winners will each receive $20.00
5. Winner selection: A random drawing will be conducted on or about 7/31/2006. Odds of winning depend on the number of eligible entries received.
6. Winner’s List: The first name and state of the winner’s will be posted on the website after the winner’s have been officially notified and permission is granted from their parents or guardians to post the child’s names.
7. Notification: Winner’s will be notified by phone or email. All reasonable attempts will be made to contact the winner.
8. Eligibility: All students ages 18 years of age or younger at time of entry are eligible. All prizes are in US dollars.
Miss Mason believed that children must be educated on good books. "No education," she wrote, "seems to be worth the name which has not made children at home in the world of books, and so related them, mind to mind, with thinkers who have dealt with knowledge."

It is in the lap of the parent that the child first explores the universe of the printed page, and it is in the school atmosphere that this relationship with living books is extended into new frontiers. In recent days, whole-language theorists have encouraged what Miss Mason knew all along: children of all ages must be immersed in the world of literature. For younger children working through the mechanics and convention of print, the teacher read-aloud become the vehicle for them to enter the world of living books. They listen to the cadence of the language, become friends with the characters, and see the events with the mind’s eye. And this experience should not only happen in the first few years of school; children of all ages should be listening to literature being read aloud. Each grade should have its own book list of read alouds for the purpose of enjoyment and delight.

Learning to Read

Let us take a closer look at the younger child’s learning to read. On this topic Miss Mason had definite ideas. First of all, in the nursery at home prior to grade one (age six), the child had been given a daily diet of reading already-in the lap of the parent. Then come the day when the child is taught to read, most likely at age six or so. Little Bobbie has had this first lesson in reading, described in Home Education. We listen in on one mother recounting to another her experience with Bobbie in the nursery ("Two Mothers Confer," pages 207-214). A quick reading provides us with some assumptions about Bobbie:

- He knows his letters and sounds (in fact, it appears that Bobbie has “caught” these from playing with older siblings at a sand table and by using letter squares).
- He has a large receptive vocabulary already.
- He finds some words more interesting than others.

- He has an amazing capacity for apprehending words visually.

If we have done any reading at all of Miss Mason’s thoughts on children, we must note that Bobbie is a normal child in her eyes. Using a chalkboard, several copies of a nursery rhyme (some cut up word by word), and Bobbie’s natural mental powers, he is able within thirty minutes not only to read the twelve different words that make up the nursery rhyme, but is able to generalize those words to other print. The method goes something like this:

- Mother writes “Cock Robin” on the blackboard (for this is the nursery rhyme) and then tells Bobbie that the words are “Cock Robin.”
- He then makes the words “Cock Robin” from memory, using loose letters.
- Bobbie finds the words “Cock Robin” in a bag containing the words of the rhyme.
- He is then shown the rhyme written on a sheet of paper and asked to find the words “Cock Robin.”
- The other words of the rhyme are taught in the same manner. As the words are found, they are set aside where they can be seen and reviewed.
- Once all the words have been learned, mother dictates the rhyme line by line as Bobbie finds the words in his “word bank.”
- Bobbie then reads off the rhyme line by line to mother from his words.
- Bobbie reads the selection from the sheet containing the full rhyme.
- On the next day, mother does word-building from the selection—“sparrow,” “arrow,” “narrow,” “marrow.”

From then on, the mother offers a day of reading alternating with word studies. In this session we see that phonetic words is combined with a “look-say” method. This ability to visualize and focus the powers of the mind is reinforced further in school through the use of narration (retelling after a single reading), picture talks, musical appreciation, nature notebooks, and dictation.
Teachers of young children should take time to learn from this mother’s methods. Miss Mason sets forth this question for us to consider: “What is it we propose in teaching a child to read?

a. That he should know at sight, say, some thousand words;
b. That he shall be able to build up new words with the elements of these.

Let him learn ten new words a day, and in twenty weeks he will be, to some extent, able to read, without any question as to the number of letters in a word. For the second, and less important, part of our task, the child must know the sounds of the letters and acquire power to throw given sounds into new combinations.

How Miss Mason would have detested the teaching of meaningless “sound bite” parts like sta, ste, sti, sto, stu or nonsense words such as crub, stame, flig. She believed that the child “should be taught from the first to regard the printed word as he already regards the spoken word, as the symbol of fact or idea full of interest.” The length of the word is of no consequence; it is the interest of the word that matters and sets up associations in the child’s mind that “couple the objects with their spoken names.” Although Miss Mason uses interesting words such as buttercup and robin red-breast, we may find others to our students’ liking and interest. Nursery rhymes and children’s poetry provide good starting points for reading, and certainly a number of publishers on the literature-based track for reading offer alternatives to the purely phonetic-based approaches so prevalent in today’s educational climate.

In schools where Miss Mason’s principles of reading are being followed, I have seen young students eagerly making connections in receptive to expressive vocabulary (both in sight and phonetic sound), using chapter books, children’s literature, nursery rhymes, and “big books” to foster a lifetime love for books and the needed strategies for growth in reading (fluency, understanding, expression). Very importantly, there are the literature-based read-alouds on a daily basis so that while our children are developing the tools of reading they are not missing the beauty and depth of a well-told story.

While our children are developing the tools of reading they are not missing the beauty and depth of a well-told story.

Reading for the Older Child

The child over nine is moving into fluency and independence in reading; we see the student reading to know for himself rather than being read to by another. Inflection, phrasing, depth, and complexity mark this transition. These students also have greater capacity for narrating in sequence and detail, pulling the author’s vocabulary, style, and voice into the retelling. Whereas with the child under nine we might read several paragraphs and up to a page before asking him to narrate, we begin requiring the older child to read a chapter for himself before narrating. But it is always a single reading with an immediate retelling; at this age oral and written narrations are both used.

As we read A Philosophy of Education, it becomes obvious that Miss Mason’s students had exposure to great literature even in the young years. Reading lessons were taken from such books as Andrew Lang’s Tales of Troy and Greece, The Heroes of Asgard, Aesop’s Fables, and The Pilgrim’s Progress for students ranging in age from seven and a half to nine (pp. 180-181). Once the student had the tools of reading and was developing fluency, expression, Intelligence, and regard for punctuation (about age nine to eleven), literature and history converged. Names such as Homer, Shakespeare, Stevenson, Scott, and Bulfinch began to emerge, and a much higher purpose for reading than simple enjoyment came forth. The reading of great literature led to two avenues of knowledge—that of God and that of man. Both were mirrored in the great works by the great minds. “Literature,” wrote Miss Mason in A Philosophy of Education, “not only reveals to us the deepest things of the human spirit, but is profitable also for example of life and instruction in manners” (p. 338). One school in which I was the headmaster reoriented its curriculum for the purpose of concertedly integrating history and literature for grades 4 to 8. Literature was used to make history come alive for the students, for them to experience the life and times of the people of the past, and to think through the ideas of the ages. Therefore, students in grade four would read The Golden Goblet in conjunction with a study of Egypt.
while children in grade five would read (among others) Adam of the Road to support a study of the Middle Ages. As the students were dealing with the general content for history by project and copybook, they were also encountering the cultures of the past through literature.

When children have grown up with a steady diet of living books from the beginning, they will not clamor in later years for what Miss Mason calls twaddle. “As for literature-to introduce children to literature is to install them in a very rich and glorious kingdom, to bring a continual holiday to their doors, to lay before them a feast exquisitely served. But they must learn to know literature by being familiar with it from the very first.” From the lap to the school desk, students must be at home in the world of books.

It would appear that the teacher offers little in the way of literature instruction; instead the responsibility lies in the relationship between the reader and what is read. “Given a book a literary quality suitable to their age,” Miss Mason writes, “children will know how to deal with it without elucidation” after a single reading. But as teachers, we feel there must be some appropriate manner in which to find out what our students are taking in by all this reading! But Miss Mason goes on to write (to our utter consternation):

“Treat children in this reasonable way, mind to mind; not so much the mind of the teacher to that of the child,-that would be to exercise undue influence-but wit the minds of a score of thinkers who meet the children, mind to mind, in their several books, the teacher performing the graceful office of presenting the one enthusiastic mind to the other.”

The teacher’s role becomes that of providing the time and the “score of thinkers” to the child for her edification. And from this the reader has a responsibility-that of a single reading and a retelling of what has been read, either orally or in written form. It is by this retelling that the student expresses what she knows, for what one cannot tell, one does not know.

What bears scrutiny is our choice of books. Certainly today the pendulum has swung back to what we call the classics, as we see by the popularity and success of the homeschool curriculum purveyors who have plumbed the heights and depths in pursuit of the best literature available. We are even seeing the resurgence of old friends from our own childhood-Rosemary Sutcliff and G.A. Henty, to name two. Resources such as Let the Authors Speak by Carolyn Hatcher provide exhaustive lists of living books for all ages based on history. Books out of print may be searched for on the internet (an expensive proposition if you need ten copies!) The responsibility of the school is to decide its course of study with definite literature selections for each grade level, read-alouds and independent books. Miss Mason has much to say about what makes a worthy and living book; it is to her you many go for book selection criteria.

Some Final Thoughts

At some time on the school calendar, principals and teachers should sit down to work through a number of vital questions. What might a review of our school reading and literature curriculum reveal to us? Does our philosophy of education match up with the methods and books we have selected for our children? How is it that we teach our younger students to read? Are our students choosing to read outside of school as a leisure activity? What do our literature lessons in upper grades look like? What criteria do we use to select worthy living books for our students? How do we deal with vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency? What is the place of narration in the scope of things? Each school might develop a presenting list of questions grade level by grade level, or a bibliographic list of the books both read by students and read aloud by teachers could be compiled for analysis. This is important and worthy of our consideration as a school staff.

We cannot overemphasize the importance of the home with regard to books and reading. The very culture of the homeplace must be challenged not only to acknowledge the necessity of reading, but to discover the changes necessary to place books back into their rightful place there. “It is our part,” penned Miss Mason, “to see that books take root in the homes of our scholars and we must make parents understand that it is impossible to give a liberal education to children who have not a due provision of various books.” The application of this principle is problematic and often falls upon the school’s shoulders, but there are creative first-step solutions to get books into the home: school-sponsored parent literature clubs, book fairs, class-wide home literature read-alouds, and parent workshops.
Classical Education is enjoying a much-deserved day in the sun. The Well-Trained Mind and other recent books have shed new light on an old model of education, and thus ancient ideas are touching our modern methods, shaping them to resemble an education rooted in antiquity.

Charlotte Mason, a British educator of the last century, was not much different from ourselves. She cared passionately about offering the best education possible to children, while lamenting the general state of education in her day and time. Her six volume series of educational writings (now called The Original Homeschooling Series) reveals the extent of her experience and her research on education.

She was familiar with all the popular modern educators whose influence was strong at that time (and continues to this day) – Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Herbart, Montessori. She borrowed what she found good from them, though her writings are littered with dissatisfaction with them and “progressive education” in general. She wrote:

“Is there not some confusion of ideas about this fetish of progress? Do we not confound progress with movement, action, assuming that where these are there is necessarily advance? Whereas much of our activity is like the waves of the sea, going always and arriving never” (A Philosophy of Education, p297)

Miss Mason also reached back into the past, to educators who certainly deserve to be called “classical,” such as Comenius, Milton, and Plutarch. These are the men she quoted again, and again, as she attempted to articulate a method of education which would incorporate the principles of the best part of classical education. She especially sought to fulfill Milton’s goal of developing “magnanimity” in her students.

David Hicks, in Norms and Nobility, reminds us that the primary goal of the classical educators was to instill virtue in their pupils – not merely to provide them with rigorous, intellectual training. He discusses the ancient’s “Ideal” – the hero, the man of virtue, whom they aspired to imitate at great length. This was an education of the spirit – not a practical, utilitarian education by any means, but an education intended to teach man to serve something other than self. This kind of education does not teach a man how to fulfill his desires – it teaches him what he ought to desire. Intellectual development was only a part of the process.

The goal of classical education was the attainment of virtue. David Hicks asks the question, “Can virtue be taught?” and he tells us that all of the notable ancients answered, “yes.” It sounds remarkably like Charlotte Mason’s contention that the chief end of education is the formation of character. David Hicks says, “The sublime premise of a classical education asserts that right thinking will lead to right, if not righteous, acting.”
This emphasis on guarding our thoughts and thinking rightly is found throughout Charlotte Mason’s writings. But now, then, is this form of education to be carried out?

Miss Mason lived and worked and taught long before Dorothy Sayers wrote her essay, “The Lost Tools of Learning.” Her view of classical education, therefore, does not incorporate the popular Trivium terminology of the “stages” of education, called “grammar stage, logic stage, and rhetoric stage.” However, she does incorporate the fundamental principles of classical education in her philosophy.

This begins with a focus on language – words both written and spoken. The ancient and medieval educators were primarily dealing with language and literature. Charlotte Mason used literature to capture the attention of boys and girls from all walks of life. As she observed poor children from uneducated families enjoying Shakespeare and other excellent authors, she came to understand how vital it was for children to learn from literary sources.

She recommended that even the youngest pupils’ minds be fed with the very best that was available – Plutarch, the King James Bible, Shakespeare, Pilgrim’s Progress – as well as poetry, art, and music. The children were taught to narrate all their school lessons, and thus they practiced an educational method rooted in classical rhetoric and prescribed by Erasmus:

“Our master must not omit to set as an exercise the reproduction of what he has given to the class. It involves time and trouble to the teacher, I know well, but it is essential. A literal reproduction of the matter taught is, of course, not required – but the substance of it presented in the pupil’s own way” (Erasmus, “Upon the Right Method of Instruction”).

Charlotte Mason recommended that oral narration come first, and this was practiced throughout the high school years. Written narrations were added between ages 10 and 12, or when the students were able to write fluently. Because they were in the habit of organizing and speaking their thoughts via narration, Miss Mason’s students were able to write extensively about what they knew. As the students grew, this writing was often what we might call “composition” or even “creative writing.” Charlotte Mason gives explicit examples of such assignments, such as rewriting a scene from Jane Austen to take place in modern times, or imagining the future influence of the League of Nations and writing about its accomplishments 30 years hence.

Miss Mason was not interested in an education that looked solely to the past, focusing only of Greek and Roman history and culture. She took the best of classical education – its principles and methods – and attempted to articulate a philosophy of education that would revitalize her own time. She wrote:

“The task before us in setting in order the house of our national education is a delicate one. We must guard those assets of character which the education of the past affords us, and recover, if we may, the passionate love of knowledge for its own sake which brought about an earlier Renaissance” (Formation of Character, pp.381-2)

It is interesting to note that, although Charlotte Mason did not adhere to what we call the “stages” of the trivium, she did observe a natural progression in the nature of education. She calls the early years of learning the “synthetic” stage of education, for the learner...
is gathering knowledge from many sources and in gathering knowledge from many sources and in developing relationships with them. During these years, the emphasis is on wide exposure to every area of knowledge – literature, poetry, history, all branches of science, art, music, Scripture – in short, all the areas of knowledge that men have cared to write about. Her emphasis is different from Dorothy Sawers', in that she did not insist that children memorize facts, but that they have the opportunity to learn to care, or develop relationships with a variety of subjects.

“The question is not – how much does the youth know when he has finished his education – but how much does he care? And about how many orders of things does he care? In fact, how large is the room in which he finds his feet set? And, therefore, how full is the life he has before him?” (School Education, p.382)

The next stage of education she calls the “analytical” stage. As the mind of the student matures, he begins to analyze and interpret what he reads. The final stage she does not name, but tells us that the first two stages will coalesce, so that the pupil becomes in essence a scholar – reading both widely and studiously. “If we are to read and grow thereby, we must read to know, that is our reading must be study – orderly, definite, purposeful” (Formation of Character, p.382)

This progression in education is not at the forefront of her methods, but it underlies everything, lending structure and order to what she proposes. Miss Mason wrote extensively about the mind – the way that it works (so far as that knowledge was available to her), what it requires for growth, and how that may be effected through education. Were she to write a book today, she might title it, The Well-Nourished Mind, for she compares the ability of the mind to assimilate knowledge to the ability of the digestive tract to deal with its proper food. That was why she insisted that the books and materials used in education should be nothing less than the very finest literature available.

Those who have chosen to follow the educational principles of Charlotte Mason con do so with the confidence that her methods are classical in every important area. The classical educators of antiquity did not always agree with one another about the exact practices, but those differences do not make one “more classical” or another “less classical.” The same is true of the different voices espousing classical education today. Differences of practice are not the same as differences of principle. The methods of Charlotte Mason are as valid a path to classical education as those set forth in The Well-Trained Mind.

Those who seek to incorporate the methods of Charlotte Mason with classical education will not find it difficult to do so, because the roots of her philosophy lie therein. She was seeking a classical education that would serve the needs of the general population, but founded in principles that had weathered well. The practical application of her philosophy is not always easy to discern, but the results are well worth the effort.

Thank you Karen for writing this article and allowing us to reprint it here.
We do not want only to develop a love for reading in our children. We want to develop a love for reading good literature. We won’t develop an appetite for good food by feasting on junk food – and we carry that analogy over to literature. So how do we know what books are good and suitable for our children?

Lists of recommended books help us to narrow our search for good books to read. However, what others consider good books are not necessarily good by our standards. We must learn to evaluate literature ourselves. This means we must actually read some good literature. It’s like playing an instrument – practicing many pieces of good music will help us to develop a taste for what is good. In the same way, we develop a taste for good literature by reading a few of the classics such as Our Mutual Friend by Charles Dickens, Back of the North Wind by George MacDonald, or Hitty, Her First Hundred Years by Rachel Field.

Once we’ve developed some sense for what is good, then we need to explore the stacks at the local library. Years ago, when we first began our own book explorations, there were many good books in the libraries. The stacks have since been depleted by library book sales. In some libraries, good books have become endangered species. Today, the old book store may be a more fruitful hunting ground for good books.

At first, it was hit or miss for us. We went to the library’s children’s section and looked for old and oft-used hardback books – the ones with beat up spines. The condition of a book is no sure guide to the quality of its contents, but it’s a beginning place. There were two main things we considered when picking out books for our children: (1) literary quality and (2) suitability.

Here are a few questions to ask ourselves regarding literary quality:

a. Does the vocabulary and sentence structure show good literary style?

b. Is the plot (conflict and resolution) believably and skillfully presented?

c. Is there good character development?

d. Is it true to the historical period?

e. If it’s supposed to be humorous, is it really… or is it just stupid?

f. Does it stimulate thought, or is it fluffy, superficial, or tiresome to read?

Here are a few things which we should be looking for regarding suitability:

a. Is my child capable of appreciating this book?

b. Are there moral issues in the story which are too mature for my child to be confronted with?

c. Is the moral tone loose, worldly, or frivolous?

d. Does this book incorporate a bad philosophy which could worm its way into my child’s thinking?

e. Does it feed an appetite which my child should not develop?

Our children need to be informed, but not in a way which gives them an appetite for the world and its ways. We should select books which are consistent with our Biblical worldview. The Bible itself has examples of everything – the good, the bad, and the ugly – and just as we present parts of the Bible to our children at appropriate ages, so we must do with other books. Sometimes a good book (such as The Time Machine by H.G. Wells) which incorporates a bad element (socialism) can serve as an example of how philosophy can be hidden in attractive dressing. Read and enjoy The Time Machine, but at an age when your child is able to analyze the philosophy in the reading.

We find that the author of one good book usually writes other good books, but it’s not safe to assume this for every author. Wilke Collins’ The Moonstone is an exceptional piece of literature, but beware of his other works. Don’t be afraid to drop a book once you see that it’s not worth your time. The Captain Hornblower series starts out with great promise, but poorly resolved moral issues later on make the series unacceptable to us. On the other hand, some books (such as The Wreck of the Grosvenor by W. Clark Russell) start out slowly in the first couple of chapters, and if we don’t give them a decent chance, we may miss a very good book.

Thank you Laurie and Harvey Bluedorn for letting us use this article.
Part I: Narration: Preparing for Expression

"PNEU, that's narration, isn't it?"

This strong statement, from Helen Wix’s article, directly associates Charlotte Mason’s PNEU schools with narration. I began to wonder if we were grasping the concept of narration well enough in our homeschool.

Narration cannot be described in a simple ‘how to’ step by step process. This teaching tool is a living tool. Narration lives in each child as he expresses his thoughts and ideas. It is important in all stages of development and develops with the child.

Below are ideas taken from various sources for a deeper understanding, experiencing narration as a true living art.

1. Retell or tell back. Bluedorns express the basic benefits of narration well. By telling back what was read we can use it “to develop and sharpen the mental capacities” of the child. This is an important skill, the ability to commit to memory and tell what the lesson was about.

2. Comprehension exercises. The book The Well Trained Mind suggests narration can be used in place of the fill-in-the blank questions. Instead the child, “uses all his mental faculties to understand, sort through, reorganize, and relate the main points of the story.

3. “The Child’s Art.” Charlotte Mason knew children loved to narrate; they love to share what they have experienced. In Home Education she goes on to describe a boy telling about a dog-fight. The dog-fight narration became an epic story with the help of the boy’s lively imagination. The story has developed from a simple retelling to the boy’s own story.

4. Developing concentration. The rule is, read the passage only once. In the beginning the passage will need to be shorter, until the child’s concentration level is built up to hear or read longer passages. In the article by Manders it is said if the narration has been badly narrated to ask “Don't you remember...What a pity! Now you will not know that bit. You must listen better next time.”

5. Observation and Thought. Helen E Wix says narration becomes a wonderful compare/contrast tool. It is habit with, “an ability to relate what was learnt last term, last week, and yesterday with ‘this’ that we are now considering.”

6. Written. As the child grows older written narrations can be expected. At first a child’s answers may wander from the point, but according to the article by G.F. Husband this is to be expected. “It is of paramount importance that the teacher keep prominently before him the psychological processes involved.”

7. Illustrate. Examples from past history, poetry, theories, and other valuable works can be used to illustrate an example in analyzing the reading. “This should lead to a valuable use of analogy, and application of past history to modern times and modern problems.”

Here are ideas from the PR articles on varying the narrations:

— Acting what comes next
— Dramatic performance of what was read
— Let the young child tell teddy
— Mom narrates making a mistake to see if the child catches her
— Picture drawing
— Map drawing
— Clay modeling
— Paper model
— Let the child ask questions
— Narrate in pieces to each other
— Discussion or debate
and well developed oral skills have become. Everyone needs to speak clearly to get their message heard.

Developing the habit of speaking properly while young will benefit any child during the rhetoric years. Susan Wise and Jessie Wise Bauer in *The Well Trained Mind* use recitation along with all memory work.

The tool of recitation may not be as living as narration, but it does call for an art its own. Bluedorns in *Teaching the Trivium* call recitation, oral interpretation or interpretive reading. Pointers in their book are given on what should be ‘studied’ while reading aloud.

- Articulation
- Inflection
- Proper breathing
- Quality of voice
- Loudness

This is an area which a competition may be a great way to take the art beyond the home. In high school a local forensics club could be started. Personally growing up, my mother would expect us to take part in the Fine Arts Festival with 4-H and give a speech or other oral communication exercise as part of our homeschool experience. Other clubs and groups offer chances for students to give a speech or recite a piece either for a competition or just experience at the local level.

Charlotte Mason suggests “recitation and committing to memory are not necessarily the same thing.” (Home Education) “The child should speak beautiful thoughts so beautifully, with such delicate rendering of each nuance of meaning, that he becomes to the listener the interpreter of the author’s thought. Now, consider what appreciation, sympathy, power of expression this implies, and you will grant that ‘The Children’s Art’ is, as Steele said of the society of his wife, ‘a liberal education in itself.’”

**Part II: Recitation: Preparing for Oral Expression**

Charlotte Mason says in *Home Education*, “I hope that my readers will train their children in the art of recitation; in the coming days, more even than in our own, will it behove every educated man and woman to be able to speak effectively in public; and, in learning to recite you learn to speak.”

These words ring true even today. Telephone, radio, television, and now talking into your palm pilot or computer all prove how important

**Silent narration**

And last here is a list of what to do and what not to do with narrations:

- Prepare. Write all difficult names on the blackboard, make sure all terms which need explaining are explained, give any background material that may be needed to understand the passage. All interesting extras should be told at the beginning, including questioning about the previous lesson.
- Length. Regulate the length in regards to the child’s ability and the difficulty of the reading.
- Immediate. Let the child narrate immediately.
- Interruptions. Let mistakes go until after the narration is complete. Then correct only those that are important to correct. Let other children listening correct mistakes if they can.
- Reading. Read the passage only once.
- Expecting more. Whatever the child narrates is good. Someone else could tell more after, but whatever the child contributes is their contribution and they should be proud of it.
- Words. Words should always be used in a narration, oral or written. If an alternate for of narration is used, such as clay modeling, then the child should be allowed to tell about their model.
- Opinions. When discussion arises the teacher must be careful to not let (Home Education)”opinions be formed on too little knowledge; it is an opportunity to show children how dangerous such carelessly formed opinions can be.”
Part III Dictation: Preparing for Written Expression

I was not able to read any articles which discussed dictation, but I felt this tool should be included here.

“Jack London learned to write by copying literature in the San Francisco Public Library. Benjamin Franklin learned to write by copying essays from “The Spectator”. The classical pupil learns to write by copying great writers.” (The Well Trained Mind)

Dictation may seem a simple tool; write word for word what is being spoken aloud. This tool offers the developing mind a strong beginning in written composition. It seems the more disciplined tool, asking the student for perfect replication.

Beginning with copywork, dictation lays the foundation for carefully replicating the passage. As dictation becomes more difficult through use of more difficult material the student learns the mechanics of language; spelling, grammar, etc; as well as the creativity of expressing ideas through writing. The exercise writing what is heard will prepare the student to write the words they ‘hear’ and ‘see’ in their minds and hearts.

Ruth Beechick, in her book *A Strong Start in Language*, outlines activities in dictation ranging from the simplest to the most difficult.

- Trace a letter or word
- Copy a letter or word or sentence
- Write from slow dictation, with help writing it correctly
- Write something familiar from normal dictation, compare and correct
- Write something unfamiliar from dictation, compare and correct
- Study and write from dictation a paragraph compare and correct
- Take dictations longer than a paragraph, compare and correct
- Take notes from a reading, try to rewrite the passage from the notes a few days later

My hope in writing this article would be to offer a list, of sorts, of ideas to glean from throughout the year. For further reading I have listed the works cited.

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“Much learning does not teach understanding.” -Heraclitus(504-480 BC)

“Learning is not attained by chance, it must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence.” -Abigail Adams(1744-1818)
I was standing in a doorway in the library. Thirty pre-school children encircled a librarian. I grew envious as I watched those children sit spellbound. I couldn’t get my own four children to sit still while I read to them, and this librarian had thirty kids sitting on the edge of their seats. And they didn’t even have seats.

What did that librarian have that I didn’t? I decided to find out and make some changes in my read-aloud times.

I’m not the type that loves the spotlight. I can’t turn out a great theatrical performance. However, I’ve learned some keys that have unlocked the power of a great reading time.

**Control Your Pace**

First I needed to control my pace while I was reading. The human mind can read at lightning speed. When we read silently we can bolt through a chapter much faster than when we are reading aloud. My mind was racing ahead and my mouth was doing everything it could to keep up. Consequently, I found that I had two reading speeds when I read to my children—full throttle and emergency stop.

So, I made one simple change. I slowed down. And that one change captured my kids’ attention.

When I thought about the rapid rate at which I had been reading, I realized how difficult it was for my kids to catch everything I was saying. Granted, a child is gifted at learning a new language, but it’s difficult to learn that language if it’s flying by at super-sonic speed.

Imagine you’re learning German. You decide to test your new language. You fly to Germany and greet the first person you meet with, “Guten tag.” With that one German phrase you open the floodgates and your new German friend welcomes you to Germany, comments on the weather, and suggests numerous tourist sights you might want to check out. Likely, you’d only catch about half of what he was saying. That’s what my kids had to endure before I got control of my reading pace.

Once I got control of myself and stopped reading so fast, I realized I could control the emotion of scenes in the book by varying my reading speed. I learned this from movies. My wife and I were watching a movie one night. The music changed to dissonant chords that grated on me, making me edgy. I leaned over to Paula and said, “Something scary’s going to happen. The music changed.”

If movies could use techniques to control a viewer’s emotions, why couldn’t I use those techniques to add zip to my reading times? So, when an author tries to build tension or prepare the reader for something scary, I’ll lower my voice almost to a whisper, slow down, drag the scene out, and then explode at the point of climax.

Slowing down also affords me other benefits. I can now make eye contact with my kids, which also draws their attention to the story. When I make eye contact it’s more like hearing a storyteller rather than a reader.

Eye contact isn’t the only benefit of a slow pace. I can also scan ahead in the book. That’s an important skill, but we’ll get to that later.
I still use my fast reading voice now and then. My son loves action books, and action just cries out to be read fast, with a lot of intensity. However, that fast rate is purposeful and controlled. It's no longer the brakeless speeding train it used to be.

I Do Voices

I got amazing results when I found that first key to riveting reading times. When I saw how much more my children enjoyed their reading time I decided to search for more keys, and the movie Mrs. Doubtfire led me to the next one.

In one scene the youngest child is excited about the new nanny because “she does the voices.” Little does she know that the new nanny is her father in disguise. I wanted to be that father. No, I didn’t want to wear a dress. I wanted to do voices.

In the beginning I felt like a fool. The first book I tried voices on was A Bear Called Paddington. It really wasn’t voices, it was just a British accent. The accent shifted throughout the story and my daughter gave me questioning looks. Still, I didn’t give up because I was reminded of some advice about singing I once gave a friend.

“Just try new things,” I told her. “At first you’ll sound really ridiculous, then you won’t sound too bad, and eventually you’ll sound pretty good and people will be asking you what your secret is.”

Heeding my own advice I persisted and the accent got better. It no longer changed during the course of the story. And more importantly, my children stopped thinking the accent was weird and started actually enjoying it.

But what about different people speaking in the same accent? Each should have a different voice. So, I found some tricks to giving different voices to different people.

Women know they can imitate a man’s voice by making a deep voice, but men often have trouble imitating women’s voices. I don’t have a lot of trouble with this because I’ve got a high voice, but I’ve heard men with deep voices do very good women’s voices.

The trick they use is to make their voices light and breathy. Guys, don’t try to read with a high pitch, just lighten up. If you’re having trouble, raise your eyebrows as high as they’ll go. Then you’ll get that light sound. Now make sure you’re breathing plenty of air through the voice. It sounds like a woman with a low voice doesn’t it?

But what if two characters have the same accent and the same gender? That was the next challenge to overcome, and it ties into the last key for making reading times captivating, learning from the masters.

“Just try new things... At first you’ll sound really ridiculous, then you won’t sound too bad, and eventually you’ll sound pretty good.”
Learn from the Masters

In his book *Jump Start Your Brain* Doug Hall says we approach creativity wrong. When we're trying to be creative we try to drag ideas out of our heads. Now my head doesn't exactly resemble a cornucopia of ideas. It's more like a wicker basket with a piece of dried out apple. So, it's difficult for me to get a lot of good ideas out of it. Hall says the best way to be really creative is to draw ideas from others. A variety of ideas from others tends to spur your own good ideas.

Stop by your local library and glance through the audio book section. Check out a couple of fiction novels and listen to the voices the narrator uses. You'll hear gruff voices, bold voices, meek voices, musical voices, and a host of others.

It's amazing what the professionals can do with a story. In *Saucer* by Steven Coonts the reader Dick Hill does amazing things with voices. He does the main character Rip Cantrell, Rip's female accomplice Charley Pine, two oil diggers, two Australians, a group of Libyans, the president of the United States, U.S. Air Force personnel, and Rip's uncle Eg. That is a mouthful.

A critical ear and some practice will lock some great voices into your mind. The car is a great place to practice. When I'm alone in my car I'll practice accents and voices. No one is around so I don't have to feel like a fool. I'll try just about anything that comes out of the speakers of my car. I'm sure people in other vehicles think I'm a little flipped out, but that's ok. I am a little flipped out. I'm a parent.

The masters can teach us voices, but that's not all. They've also mastered emotions. They do sad, angry, shocked, frightened, and others so well you feel sad, angry, shocked, or frightened yourself.

Even when they aren't shouting you can feel their voices seething with fury. They read through choked up voices and even sobs. They let laughter bubble through the words. They gasp with surprise or fright.

If you would like some ideas of which readers to listen to check out Audio File Magazine's Audio Awards at audiofilemagazine.com/finalists.html. You'll find the readers that have received awards for their ability to tell a story. That's not a bad starting place.

You see, we are reading the words but we really want to tell the stories. When I read to my kids I picture myself standing next to a campfire or seated in the living room with kids gathered all around. There are no books, just me telling the kids a wonderful tale. That's what reading time should be.

These keys can unlock new worlds for your kids. They will see worlds that are full of color and life and bursting with realism. You'll captivate them. And, best of all, you'll hear those words I love to hear, “Will you read to me.”
My son, if you accept my words and store up
my commands within you,
turning your ear to wisdom and applying your
heart to understanding,
and if you call out for insight and cry aloud
for understanding,
and if you look for it as silver and search for
it as for hidden treasure,
then you will understand the fear of the Lord
and find the knowledge of God.
For the Lord gives wisdom, and from His
mouth comes knowledge and understanding.

- Proverbs 2:1-6