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# INTRODUCTION

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All four of my children were taught at home through primary school and over those 15 years I learnt a lot. As I grew as a homeschool mother so did my homeschool friends and their kids, and I now have a bank of experiences and observations of what homeschooling looks like in the primary years.

I have tried to incorporate ideas and resources that I know have been successful for many homeschooling families. But remember home education is individualised education. Whilst my suggestions are a good starting point you still know your child best including their strengths, weaknesses, likes and dislikes. Please feel free to tweak my plans and make them your own.

**My chosen resources are only a handful of the resources available to homeschoolers.** However, having helped many home educating parents I have found that having a concrete plan to begin with helps shape what homeschooling looks like and makes it doable. From that point, and with a little experience under their belt, a home educator can decide what works for them.

## **New To Homeschooling**

If you are new to homeschooling and your children have been taken out of school then I urge you to take it easy on yourself at first. Learn how to teach at home and try to forget the school model as much as possible. Give yourself time to adjust to this new way of educating. Read and co-learn with your child and enjoy the benefits of increasing your own education. Allow your child to de-school and get used to thinking for themselves rather than being told what to learn. Gradually increase their reading materials and begin to implement some of the new ideas you will read in this ebook.

## **Assessing Your Students Abilities**

Our children are all different but we are all dogged with the tyranny of comparison. I encourage you to look at your child with new eyes. Work with their strengths and weaknesses and make progress for them. Please don't avoid what is hard for them but gently and thoughtfully work out how to address the challenges that are before them. If your child detests math or writing don't stop, just slow down or go back and find a resource that will work for them. If there are learning difficulties seek help if you feel they are out of your depth. We aren't bringing our kids home to hide them from the expectation of a good education.

## **A Guide For Australian Home Educators**

You will find I use the terms home education and homeschooling interchangeably. This is because they often mean the same thing. However many people prefer the term home education because it better reflects what we are doing at home with our children. We are not setting up a little school room that is mimicking public education. Instead we are looking to educate our children without institutional constraints and give them a living education.

I wrote this guide for Australian homeschoolers and I hope that this will give you a good foundation as you design your own homeschool curriculum. It is meant to be shuffled around to suit your needs. Curriculum choice varies depending on the individual child and each specific family's homeschooling needs.

## YEAR THREE TO YEAR SIX

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Over the past few years I've written a collection of blog posts and handouts on planning your own curriculum. Now I have gathered these together into one small ebook. It is a curriculum guide for those of you who want to understand the Australian Curriculum (sometimes referred to as **Australian National Curriculum -ANC**) requirements while planning your homeschool curriculum.

This is my version of how the ANC can be adapted to a homeschool setting. It's not a comprehensive scope and sequence. It is mainly a guide which still allows plenty of flexibility.

I suggest you print off this guide and read it with a pencil in hand, making comments, and adding your own ideas as you go.

Michelle Morrow

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### THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

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The Australian National Curriculum is the Australian Federal Government's attempt to standardise the education syllabi around Australia. This new syllabus is being implemented throughout Australia. You can find the [full government curriculum here](#).

South Australia, Tasmania, Queensland, Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory have adopted the curriculum without changes. Victoria, New South Wales and Western Australia have incorporated the national curriculum into their own state syllabi based on the Australian curriculum however the changes are minor.

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### STAGES OF LEARNING

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I have combined this curriculum guide into stages rather than specific years. This is also the approach used in the Australian Curriculum in their stage statements.

The Australian Curriculum is divided into four general stages.

- Foundation to Year 2
- Year 3 to Year 6
- Year 7 to Year 10

NSW has a slightly different division.

| The NSW Primary School Stages are: |                                      | Age Range |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| Stage One                          | Foundation (Kindergarten) - Year Two | 5-8       |
| Stage Two                          | Year Three - Year Four               | 8-10      |
| Stage Three                        | Year Five - Year Six                 | 10-12     |
| Stage Four                         | Year Seven - Year Eight              | 12-14     |
| Stage Five                         | Year Eight - Year Ten                | 14 -16    |

The ANC allows you to be flexible when teaching certain topics and work with a stage.

Some parents choose to wait till their children are six before they start their first year of formal schooling.

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## OUTCOME LISTS

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The Australian Curriculum is an outcome based curriculum. Another way to phrase it would be a curriculum that has educational goals or objectives rather than focusing on what you are expected to teach. For example instead of saying - *we will teach the alphabet*, an outcome would be - a child can *recite the letters of the alphabet*.

The Australian Curriculum, and other state syllabuses, lists their outcomes (or goals) as per stage or grade. You do not need to understand all the specific outcomes. Each stage has an overview of the outcomes and they are provided in their **stage statements**. Reading through these will give you a general overview of the Australian Curriculum.

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### STAGE STATEMENT YEAR THREE TO YEAR SIX

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*“The Australian Curriculum across Years 3–6 assists students to develop their ability to take positive action for well-being; relate and communicate well with others; pose questions and solve problems; make informed decisions and act responsibly. It engages students more purposefully with the discipline knowledge, understanding and skills of the eight learning areas of the Australian Curriculum.*

*Literacy and numeracy are again prioritised across these years of schooling. The curriculum further builds the essential knowledge and skills in literacy, consolidating ‘learning to read and write’ through English, as well as increasingly using literacy skills for ‘reading and writing to learn’ in other learning areas. Similarly, the curriculum continues to progress the development of specific mathematical skills and knowledge, and uses these skills in learning across the curriculum to both enrich the study of other learning areas and contribute to the development of broader and deeper numeracy skills. The development of Information and Communication Technology Capability is more apparent across the curriculum at this level.*

*The English curriculum provides opportunities to develop further understanding of grammar and language, and the skills to articulate this knowledge. More complex punctuation, clause and sentence structures, textual purposes and patterns are introduced, as are skills for classifying word, sentence and text structure and the metalanguage to communicate these ideas. Students engage with different forms (narrative, prose, plays and film) and purposes of written and spoken language to develop their skills for text creation.*

*The Mathematics curriculum extends key understandings of number, patterns and relationships, measurement and geometry, and statistics. The introduction of fractions and decimals is important; it represents a key challenge for students at this stage. While relevant mathematics and active and concrete experiences remain important, there is an increasing use of models, pictures and symbols to represent and communicate mathematical ideas.*

*The Science curriculum focuses on recognising questions of interest that can be investigated scientifically and investigating them in an increasingly systematic way. Skills and techniques to conduct a fair test using variables, accurate measurement and the idea of cause and effect, and evidence and explanation are highlighted.*

*The Humanities and Social Sciences curriculum continues to draw on students’ growing experience of community and the wider world to develop their understanding of the world, its systems, and students’ relationship to other people, places and systems, past and present. Methodical investigation using observations and concrete information sources offers opportunities to develop*

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## FOR NSW HOME EDUCATORS

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**For those home educating in NSW** who are worried that the NSW Board of Studies syllabus has not been used exactly, do not fret. Here is a quote taken from the [NSW Home Schooling Registration Package 2013](#):

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“THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM IDENTIFIES THE INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES **BASED ON** THE RELEVANT BOARD OF STUDIES SYLLABUS AND RELEVANT CONTENT.”

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Since the NSW syllabus is **based on** the Australian Curriculum, differences are minimal and your program only needs to be **based on** the NSW Board of Studies syllabus which is, as mentioned, **based on** the Australian Curriculum anyway.

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“A PARENT MAY USE THE SYLLABUS STAGE STATEMENTS AS THE **BASIS FOR PLANNING** THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM; OR THE PARENT USE SYLLABUS CONTENT TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM IS **BASED ON** RELEVANT BOSTES SYLLABUSES.” [BOSTAS HOME EDUCATION QUESTIONS 2014](#)

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The 2013 Home Education Package is currently under review and in a recent meeting I attended the BOSTAS representatives stated that they do not expect homeschoolers to list all the outcomes in their homeschool program. They suggested reading through the stage statements.

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## KEY LEARNING AREAS

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In the Australian Curriculum the following subject areas are taught in the primary years:

- English,
- Maths,
- Science and Technology,
- Humanities and Social Science (History, Geography and Civics and Citizenship)
- Creative and Practical Arts,
- Personal Development, Health and Physical Education
- Languages (optional in primary NSW, flexible in WA)

\* Some subject names can vary depending on states.

These subjects are usually called **key learning areas**.

As a rough guideline, the NSW Board of Studies suggests that approximately 30% of your school lessons are spent on English, 20% on Math, and 30% on the other subjects. 20% is left for additional subjects such as religious education, extra sports, concerts or excursions. I haven't broken these topics into hours because I don't want your child to get tied to a seat for their school work. One hour of seat work a day will usually be more than enough for a five year old.

When you homeschool, much of the learning can still take place in the form of discussion and general activities. Reading aloud on the couch can form a large portion of your English lesson

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## IS THIS A SECULAR HOMESCHOOL CURRICULUM?

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The Bible is not a key learning area of the ANC but it still can be incorporated into your curriculum and included in several key learning areas, if desired. Reading basic Bible doctrine and Bible stories can be a part of your literature component for *English*. Moral and character development is also a part of *Personal Health and Development*. *Creative and Practical Arts* can include Bible art notebooks and church singing. This topic can also be documented as part of the 20% of additional learning. See our [Teaching the Bible to Kids](#) for some ideas

A Christian education is important to me and you will find I do recommend some resources that have a Christian worldview. There are also many secular resources recommended.

Throughout this ebook you will find that my Christian conviction peppers the pages but if you are not a Christian don't be offended by my beliefs. Rather I ask you when you read something that doesn't apply to your beliefs please consider what you would like to use as an alternative in the education of your child.

I wrote this guide for Australian homeschoolers and I hope that this will give you a good foundation as you design your own homeschool curriculum. It is meant to be shuffled around to suit your needs. Curriculum choice varies depending on the individual child and each specific family's homeschooling needs.

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## INTRODUCING CHARLOTTE MASON

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Charlotte Mason was a highly respected British educator in the late nineteenth century. She offered an alternative method of education to the traditional model common in her time. Her methods were often adopted by middle-class parents teaching their children at home and by upper-class families who frequently used governesses. Many schools (mostly private) also implemented her methods with great success.

Charlotte Mason founded the House of Education, a teaching college for governesses in Ambleside, in the Lake District of England. She also wrote a six volume series on educating children. Her books are available today and are known as The Original Home Schooling Series.

Charlotte Mason's books were well received, for they offered practical teaching ideas and taught the teacher how to give children a generous and rich education. Paramount in Charlotte Mason's philosophy was fostering children's relationship and knowledge of God.

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“CHARLOTTE MASON'S VISION WAS FOR A “LIBERAL EDUCATION FOR ALL,” AND THE PRACTICAL TRUTH HAS ALWAYS BEEN AND STILL IS THAT THERE IS NOT TIME TO MAKE CLASSICS SCHOLARS OF EVERY PUPIL, BESIDES THE FACT THAT NOT EVERYONE IS SUITED TO SUCH STUDIES. THERE IS TIME, HOWEVER, TO DO MORE THAN THE “THREE R'S,” WHICH ARE NO MORE THAN A UTILITARIAN ACQUISITION OF BASIC SKILLS, AND TO GIVE EVERY STUDENT A RICH FEAST OF THE BEST KNOWLEDGE THE WORLD HAS TO OFFER: A LIBERAL OR GENEROUS EDUCATION.” *CONSIDER THIS* BY KAREN GLASS ©2014

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# ENGLISH

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THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM "IS BUILT AROUND THE THREE INTERRELATED STRANDS OF LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND LITERACY...TOGETHER THE THREE STRANDS FOCUS ON DEVELOPING STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE, UNDERSTANDING AND SKILLS IN LISTENING, READING, VIEWING, SPEAKING, WRITING AND CREATING." AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL CURRICULUM

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The Charlotte Mason method teaches in the three areas suggested by the Australian Curriculum. Her methods for teaching English are simple to implement in the homeschool because they are logical, enjoyable and practical. Charlotte Mason believed living books should be the basis for all English lessons. From a good book, handwriting, spelling, literature models and literacy were all taught.

Approximately one third (or more) of your lesson time should be focused on English. Nearly all subjects can be English lessons in some way. Here is my list of suggestions for teaching English.

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## LITERATURE - READING

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### READ ALOUDS AND OWN READING

Cultivate an appetite for quality living books and visit the library regularly to restock. I like to use Bible stories, classics and Christian books for some of my read-alouds.

Use *living books* for lessons (not textbooks) and no twaddle (work just to keep them busy or silly books). Living books is a Charlotte Mason term. Briefly it means books written by authors who are passionate about their subject. They are books that capture a child's interest and are usually narrative in nature.

Outcome: This exposes children to a wide variety of literature and gives them an appetite for good quality literature.

*Reading aloud* is fundamental to the Charlotte Mason method.

Outcome: This encourages listening skills and allows books to be used beyond the level of a child's reading ability.

### Some Reading List Suggestions

- [The Box Car Children](#)
- [The Hobbit](#) by Tolkien
- [Carry on Mr Bowditch](#) by J Latham
- [The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe](#) by CS Lewis
- [Ash Road](#) by Ivan Southall
- [Little Pilgrims Progress](#) by Helen Taylor
- [Spindles](#) by Barry Chant

# SCIENCE AND NATURE STUDY

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The main difference with the National Curriculum and the Charlotte Mason method is one of sequencing when to teach and not content. However, the Charlotte Mason method uses an immersion approach, focusing on one main area of science study at a time with an emphasis on nature study. Whereas the Australian Curriculum uses a spiral approach, teaching a little bit of biology, chemistry, physics, earth and space science—each year.

Charlotte Mason wanted children to be given the skills of the scholars, starting simply yet with intention. She believed in developing scientific skills through observation (and recording those through notebooking and journaling), understanding science through quality science based literature, and through studying biographies of scientists to learn about their human endeavours.

Please note that Biblical creation is NEVER taught in the Australian Curriculum whilst evolution is. Many Christian parents choose to introduce some of the wonderful creation science books available for children during these years. Teaching your children about the secular and Biblical worldview from an early age will help them understand why some books seem to support evolution and others do not.

**One or two science lessons per week will be sufficient.** Include as much time out in nature as possible. If you have difficulty getting out and about, just go to your backyard or look around your neighbourhood.

When looking at the Australian Curriculum as a whole I can see from Kindergarten to Year Six they basically want me to teach:

## SCIENCE UNDERSTANDING

- Biology: botany, zoology (anatomy isn't really covered till Year 8),
- Earth science,
- Space science,
- Physics and chemistry.

## SCIENCE AS A HUMAN ENDEAVOUR

- Study scientists and how their knowledge has developed over time.
- How science affects people's lives and the way they work.

## SCIENCE SKILLS

- Question and observe and make predictions
- Plan experiments and collect data
- Analyse and evaluate data
- Communicate in a scientific way

# HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES

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In the primary years the Australian Curriculum's Humanities and Social Science subject is divided into sub-strands which include history, geography, civics and citizenship.

Approximately 6 -10% of school hours are allocated to Humanities and Social Science which works out to be around 1.5 – 2.5 hours per week.

During the year this subject is often rotated between the sub strands of history and geography or taught in blocks – a year of history or a year of geography. Civics and Citizenship are included from Year Three when symbols and emblems are discussed.

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## HISTORY

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The Australian National History Curriculum divides the topic of history into historical knowledge and understanding, and historical skills. The Australian National Curriculum History Syllabus and the Charlotte Mason way of teaching history bear no resemblance to each other.

### *A New Definition for History*

Firstly the ANC redefines history as most of us would understand it. It is really an Australian Social Studies course for the first four years. No chronological history is taught at all. A child's "history studies" are spent working out what is past and present, what is old and new, and learning snippets about where they were born, special celebrations and stories about their families and other families.

It isn't until they reach Year 4 that they begin to get some chronological history and that begins with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander's history. Year 5 and 6 then follow the history of Australia diverting here and there with particular political agendas.

When you look through the rest of the curriculum, from Year 7 to 10, they begin with the evolutionary assumption that "the human race came out of Africa in 60 000 BC." Then you can study one ancient civilisation in-depth in Year 7. In Year 8 you study the Middle Ages. In year 9 and 10 you study Modern History with a fair amount of social science (with political bias) thrown in.

### *Wasted Opportunity to Teach Chronological History*

What about Charlotte Mason's approach to history? She wanted to help children understand history chronologically. Charlotte Mason resources for history involved using timelines, a Book of Centuries and living books. She encouraged us to get children to connect with the stories of the past by helping them understand the people and the times, using biographies and historical fiction. She wanted children to get personally involved with the stories of history. She didn't want history to be a fact fest either so she encouraged us to use living books (not Wikipedia) to teach history. She wanted history to be understood and not to be a *hodge podge* of random events. Social studies is taught in the midst of the people of history.

So now we have a dilemma. How can we marry these two different approaches so that we can meet the requirement to follow the ANC and still teach history the CM way? I believe a practical solution is to run a chronological history strand concurrently with the ANC. This may sound like extra work but it isn't really. Since the first four years of schooling don't really teach any history,