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INTRODUCTION

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.

KINDERGARTEN TO YEAR TWO

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

THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

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.

STAGES OF LEARNING

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.

KEY LEARNING AREAS

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

- English,
- Maths,
- Science,
- Humanities and Social Science (History and Geography)
- Creative and Practical Arts,
- Personal Development, Health and Physical Education,
- Languages (optional primary NSW, flexible 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 time. Homeschooling is a lifestyle and you will also find as a homeschooling parent you are giving lessons on the spot in a variety of situations.

I have only covered five of the topics of the Australian National Curriculum. The other two key learning areas can easily be tailored to suit your children's interests.

Personal Health and Development is also another key learning area that can be taught through the activities of daily living. Instructions on nutrition and diet can happen while cooking, personal advice on hygiene can teach healthy living. Encourage participation in regular exercise, with things like walking, TV aerobics, gymnastics, bike riding, outdoor play, and backyard sports. Regular sports can also be included as part of this subject. If you have a local homeschool group they may have other lessons you can join in with. This subject can also be supplemented by the reading of appropriate library books on health related subjects if desired. Use your commonsense for this subject. You don't need to draw up detailed lessons plans but you will need to keep some documentation.

Languages is an optional subject. Some people like to teach songs in another language and counting .

ENGLISH

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

The Charlotte Mason method teaches in the three areas suggested by the ANC. 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.

LITERATURE - READING

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.

Reading lessons are a combination of basic phonics and sight words. Children are encouraged to read their own books when able.

Outcome: This develops reading skills quickly and helps children to begin to read on their own without being bogged down by spelling rules.

Classic Australian Books

Here are three three Australian classics I recommend as read alouds during these years.

- [The Complete Adventures of Blinky Bill by Dorothy Wall](#)
- [Snugglypot and Cuddlypie by May Gibbs](#)
- [Dot and The Kangaroo by Ethel Pedley](#)

SCIENCE AND NATURE STUDY

The Australian Curriculum divides science into three strands: science understanding, scientific skills, and science as a human endeavour. These three strands do marry well with a Charlotte Mason approach. 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. The main difference with the National Curriculum and the Charlotte Mason method is one of sequencing when to teach and not content.

Charlotte Mason's ideas on teaching science are perfect for home education especially in the early primary years. Not only are her methods enjoyable, creative and academically sound, they are also extremely suitable for accomplishing the state requirements many of us are expected to follow.

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 ANC whilst evolution is taught as fact. 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.

The following suggestions are for Kindergarten to Year Two. You can choose to study them in the order you desire.

When looking at the Australian Curriculum from Kindergarten to Year Two they basically want you to teach:

SCIENCE UNDERSTANDING

These years are the years of observation and discovery with an **emphasis on nature study**. Children are taught to wonder and you can basically loosely teach in all the strands from Foundation Year to Year Two.

Resource Suggestions

[My First Science: Australian Animals Mini-Books](#) – (Living World) This is a fun resource for beginning science. It is suitable for your preschool and kindergarten children. You will teach your children about twelve of Australia's unique animals using this simple, pick-up-and-go zoology resource.

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES

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.

HISTORY

The Australian History Curriculum divides the topic of history into historical knowledge and understanding, and historical skills. The Australian Curriculum's 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 Australian Curriculum and still teach history the Charlotte Mason 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