



HOMESCHOOLING HIGH SCHOOL WITH MEREDITH!

DESIGNING HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES I: THE OVERALL PLAN

You can design high school classes! Really! You can do it! Think about all the things you would like to teach your child in high school. Go ahead and make a list.

My list for each child will include things that are the same and things that are unique for each child. For instance, I want all my children to read *Communist Manifesto* in high school so that they can understand the socialist agenda in American universities and colleges. I also want them to study worldviews so that they can recognize the different worldviews that are predominate in our culture. Most of all, I want my children to know God's Word and apply it to all of life.

But then I have unique dreams for each child. For Katie Beth, it was to cultivate her gift of writing and give her opportunities to act. Julianna was a singer, so I wanted her to take voice lessons. Jenny Rose is a song writer--she developed that gift in high school. Sarah Joy is already skilled at movie making. Her high school classes include assignments to make videos!

Now, let's talk about you. What is it you want to teach your children in high school? How do you want to equip them for life? Make a list of things that are near and dear to your heart in this area. Once you have that list, we'll move on to making a general plan for the high school years. After we have the general plan, we will move on to individual course.



Start with a general plan for your child's high school years. This plan is adaptable, but it is always good to have a basic plan. Some of you will want to use your state's graduation requirements as a guideline. Each state requires so many credits (and a certain number of credits in particular subjects) to graduate from high school. We have already talked about what a high school credit is in a previous article. You can read more about credits [HERE!](#) Don't forget that some classes can be taken in eighth grade and count for high school graduation.

Each state has different requirements for graduation, but in general all states require the following for the core subjects:

4 years or credits of English

2-4 years or credits of Math

2-4 years or credits of Science (often with lab requirements!)

2-4 years or credits of Social Studies

Most states require 2 years of a foreign language. If your child is college-bound, then consider 4 years each of the core electives (English, Math, Science, Social Studies) and 2-4 years of a foreign language.

Remember, though, that you are the teacher. What does God want you to impart to your children before they graduate. Our state doesn't require credits in Bible or character, but Mike and I certainly do! We believe that the Lord wants us to train our children to know and apply the Scriptures to their daily life! What about you? What dreams do you have for your children's high school education? What do you want to have your children know when they graduate?

Don't be limited by what the state requires. Ask God for wisdom of your own family's requirements for graduation. In our house, our requirements for high school graduation are harder than the state's. Here is what Mike and I require for our children to graduate from our family homeschool high school. Remember that you can count some classes from eighth grade!

5 Credits Bible (New Testament Survey; Old Testament Survey; Worldviews & Apologetics; Church History; Great Commission)

5 Credits Social Studies (2 World History; 1 USA History; 1 Government/Current Events/Politics; 1 Economics/Business/Personal Financial Management)

5 Credits Math (Algebra I/Geometry/Algebra II/Pre-Calculus/Calculus)

4 Credits Science (Biology/Chemistry/Physics/Anatomy & Health)

2.5 Credits Literature (0.5 American Lit; 0.5 British Lit; 0.5 Shakespeare; 0.5 Western Lit; 0.5 Great Books)

2 Credits Writing (0.5 Oral & Written Communication; 0.5 Essays & Research; 0.5 Fiction Writing; 0.5 College Prep Writing)

1-2 Credits P.E.

1-3 Credits Fine Arts

4 Credits Character/Christian Living/Life Skills/Homemaking

2-3 Credits Foreign Language

So, you see my children graduate with a minimum of 31.5 credits--far more than the state of Florida requires! But I have my own set of requirements so that my children are equipped for living a productive life that honors the Lord and can move in any educational direction they choose.

Now let's talk about making a sample plan. I keep a folder for each child's homeschool plan on my computer. One file in that folder is their high school plan. I start one for each child when they are in eighth grade. Each year, I have to adapt the plan as opportunities arise for them to take various classes.

Pretend that the following is your high school plan for you high school child.

Eighth Grade: Old Testament Survey/World History I/Algebra I/Western Literature (3.5)

Ninth Grade: Church History/World History II/Geometry/Biology/Oral & Written Communication/British Literature/Spanish I/P.E./Drama (0.25) + Piano (0.25) = 0.5 Fine Arts Credit/Growing in Christ (0.5) + Courtship & Dating (0.5) = 1.0 Character (8.5 credits)

Tenth Grade: New Testament Survey/USA History/Algebra II/Chemistry/Essays & Research/American Literature/Spanish II/P.E./Sewing (0.5 Homemaking)/Godly Womanhood (0.5 Character) (8 credits)

Eleventh Grade: Worldview & Apologetics/Government & Current Events & Politics/Pre-Calculus/Shakespeare/Fiction Writing/Drawing & Watercolor (0.5) + Drum Lessons (0.5) = 1.0 Fine Arts Credit/The Christian Family (0.5) + Starts own Business (you make it a course) (0.5) = 1.0 Life Skills (6 credits)

Twelfth Grade: The Great Commission/Economics & Business & Personal Finances/Calculus/Great Books/College Prep Writing/Runs own business as course 1.0 Life Skills/Leading worship as a course 1.0 Fine Arts (6 credits)

Total credits (32 credits)

You have followed this plan until the beginning of tenth grade. Now, you realize that there is an opportunity for your daughter to take a Shakespeare class, a Worldviews class, and an Economics class in the fall. You really want to take advantage of this opportunity. What should you do? My advice would be: DO IT! Simply readjust your plan. Your new plan will look like this:

Tenth Grade: Worldviews/Economics/Algebra
II/Chemistry/Essays &
Research/Shakespeare/Spanish II/P.E./Sewing (0.5
Homemaking)/Godly Womanhood (0.5
Character) (8 credits)

Eleventh Grade: New Testament
Survey/Government & Current Events & Politics/Pre-
Calculus/American Literature/Fiction
Writing/Drawing & Watercolor (0.5) + Drum Lessons
(0.5) = 1.0 Fine Arts Credit/The Christian Family
(0.5) + Starts own Business (you make it a course)
(0.5) = 1.0 Life Skills (6 credits)

Twelfth Grade: The Great Commission/USA
History/Calculus/Great Books/College Prep
Writing/Runs own business as course 1.0 Life
Skills/Leading worship as a course 1.0 Fine Arts (6
credits)

All you have done is juggle things around. You just
keep juggling things around as opportunities arise for
your child to take different classes!

Some classes, of course, need to be take consecutively
(like Math!), but most classes do not! My high school
plan for each child changes every year. But it helps to
have the basic plan, because I realize that all the
classes have to fit in somewhere.

Another thing to remember is that you can do an
intensive class in a month during a break from
normal school or you can do semester classes like
colleges do. With math and literature, I don't
recommend shortening the time frame because your
child can only do so many hours of math a day before
he is burned out!

Next time we will talk about designing individual
classes. For that column, you will need your list of
things you want to teach your child and a basic
plan! Until then, may your homeschooling journey be
joyful and successful! Blessings to everyone!