









# Homeschooler's Curriculum Swap

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## Subject of this thread: "HI, CAFI!"

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**Subject:** HI, CAFI!  
**Name:** kate theriot  
**Time/Date:** 23:27:52 9/17/97  
**Message:**

Welcome! We are so thrilled to have you back for another high school homeschooling discussion!

I was present for your "live" discussion last year, and as a result, am now teaching my 4 kids plus 3 neighbor kids the Spanish language according to your advice. I like the Pimsleur tapes you recommended and was able to find them at the local Barnes and Noble. The kids are picking it up quickly, so I'll be looking for a used PowerGlide soon!

I'm schooling my older 2 at the 6th grade level, with the goal being college. I learned so much from you last year, I can hardly wait to read all the posts this year! 6th grade is not too soon to explore my options for hsing through high school.

I hope everyone with children ages 10 and up will participate in this discussion forum. I know it will be a great opportunity to learn all you need to know about hsing your teens and preteens.

Thanks so much for taking the time to join us. I hope you'll enjoy your "visit".



**Subject:** Hands Full and Power-Glide  
**Name:** cafi

**Time/Date:** 12:04:28 9/18/97

**Message:**

Wow, Kate, it sounds like you have your hands full. Seven kids, three not your own. What state do you live in?

Power-Glide just came out with a teacher's manual AND a CD-ROM, both of which make the program a little more user friendly. Even if you cannot find it used, it's worth the "new" price. Why? Because you can use one program for an infinite number of kids and completing the material is equivalent to 3 or 4 years of high school foreign language competency. Additionally, the program teaches kids HOW to approach foreign language study. Highly recommended (no I don't have stock in the company ).

Cafi in CA



**Subject:** Spanish

**Name:** kate theriot

**Time/Date:** 22:11:31 9/18/97

**Message:**

Hi Cafi,

I'm really excited about this year. My 11yo and 10yo are doing the Pimsleur with their close friends, plus the older sister--13yo.

I told the 4 friends that they would "only be allowed" to learn the oral Spanish. None of them is strong enough in English yet, IMO, to be ready for the written form of another language. However, the older sister is 8th grade, a good reader, and needs the exposure. This is her first time with a new language, so I am teaching her the basics of the language, \*along with\* the Pimsleur tapes. (Hablo Castellano un poco!)

I also have my 4yo and 6yo in the room while we listen to the tapes. They don't say the words with us, but at least they are hearing them.

Thanks for the info on the PowerGlide. I'm looking forward to using that.



**Subject:** Oops  
**Name:** kate theriot  
**Time/Date:** 22:13:43 9/18/97  
**Message:**

Forgot to tell you--I live in NJ.

This same neighbor co-oped with my kids for NJ History year before last.



---

**Subject:** Inviting non-boarders...  
**Name:** Sis  
**Time/Date:** 01:50:09 9/18/97  
**Message:**

I was wondering how to invite others that may not already be on this board. Will they have to go thru a registering process to post questions? If so, how long does it take?



---

**Subject:** Registration  
**Name:** Sarah Acker  
**Time/Date:** 07:58:14 9/18/97  
**Message:**

Hi, Sis--  
Registration is quick. We're not sending out passwords via email any more, so it's just a matter of filling out the registration screen and then logging in. We do prefer usernames reasonably close to real names, and one word (no spaces), please. (Yeah, I didn't follow the directions...)

Thanks for inviting others! From Kaleidoscapes, I assume?

Sarah



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**Subject:** Diploma/GED/other  
**Name:** Sis  
**Time/Date:** 16:03:56 9/19/97  
**Message:**

I think this is an important question that comes up. Are diplomas important? Can we issue our own diploma? Should our kids take the GED? What if we haven't met our state's "required" course of study? (Does it really matter?) Is a diploma needed for college?

(I'm throwing this out as a general question since this forum will be read only and for reference later.)



**Subject:** Diplomas/GED  
**Name:** cafi  
**Time/Date:** 18:26:01 9/19/97  
**Message:**

Hi Sis -- As a homeschool, you can issue your own private school diploma. I know of no state which has a statute saying you must satisfy state high school requirements to do this. We issued our own diplomas -- and the kids have NEVER been asked for them. All they are ever asked is: Do you have a high school diploma? They always check "yes" -- and they are not lying. They are never asked, "Do you have a high school diploma from an accredited institution?"

A high school diploma is NOT necessary for admission to even the most selective colleges. What they really care about is thorough documentation (transcript or portfolio) of the high school experience.

Homeschoolers may occasionally need to take a GED for admissions

to certain colleges. Other homeschoolers may take the GED simply to put closure to the high school experience. Some feel there's a negative connotation attached to the GED. I don't agree -- and in any case -- most kids won't need it for any purpose.

Cafi in CA



---

**Subject:** Diploma/GED

**Name:** Alex

**Time/Date:** 17:03:23 9/19/97

**Message:**

A partial answer is that, for people who go to college and graduate, the high school diploma becomes much less important. If you have a college degree, everybody just assumes you have a h.s. degree. People put their college degree, major, etc. on their resumes, for example, but rarely put any information about h.s.

The trouble with the GED is that, in some people's minds, it marks you as a dropout, somebody who couldn't make it through high school the first time, etc.



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**Subject:** Homeschooling Highschool  
**Name:** jen  
**Time/Date:** 07:23:05 9/18/97  
**Message:**

Your name is new to me, Cafi. I have read about you only on-line. I did go to your website and that helped me know more about you. I am homeschooling a 14 year old girl at the 10th grade level except for English, she is at the 11th grade level. My son is 13 and all subjects are 10th grade level. We are not looking to send them to college early, rather hoping to expand their options by finishing the state's requirements. Then they can do correspondence, apprenticeship, start their own business, or go on short term missions. My daughter wants to be a medical missionary and is going into nursing. She knows where she wants to go to school. Should I continue her in this direction along with helping her keep options open if she changes direction or key in on this only? Do your children direct their own education or do you? I am looking forward to this forum. Thank you for coming on. jen




---

**Subject:** Homeschooling High School  
**Name:** cafi  
**Time/Date:** 12:18:07 9/18/97  
**Message:**

Hi Jen --

Thanks for joining us! Your kids sound fabulous.  
 Regarding your 14-year-old daughter, I think that "continuing her in

this direction [medical missionary]" probably does not close off any options. After all, the academic and technical training for nursing is not for wimps! Her math, science, and language arts preparation will have to be top notch -- and apparently it is, from what you have told me.

At the same time, keep in mind that MOST kids change their goals several times throughout their teenage and even their young-adult years. Certainly our daughter, now 20 -- who also wanted to be a medical missionary at age 14 -- has changed her objectives many times since.

You asked if our children directed their own educations or I did. The answer is BOTH. I had certain "must-do's" on MY list -- not unlike a school scope & sequence, except that MY scope and sequence was VERY short. It took the kids one-two hours daily to complete MY items. They then had the remainder of the day to direct their own activities -- most of which I figured out how to define as "school" after the fact.

What state do you live in Jen? And where is your daughter planning to complete her nursing training?

Cafi in CA



**Subject:** homeschooling highschool  
**Name:** jen  
**Time/Date:** 14:50:24 9/18/97  
**Message:**

My daughter is planning to attend Bob Jones University. We live in Maine.



---

**Subject:** BJU  
**Name:** cafi  
**Time/Date:** 16:02:31 9/18/97  
**Message:**

Ah, Jen, BJU. I guess they must have a nursing program???? Has your daughter done any hospital volunteer work?

I asked about the state you lived in because you mentioned high school graduation requirements. My impression of Maine regulations is that things are pretty loose -- in other words, you don't have to "prove" much to the authorities. If oversight is lax (as it is in most states), consider going far beyond what the local schools require -- especially in the areas of your daughter's interests. The key here is not "local high school requirements," but instead target college requirements.

BJU is a good college, and you might want to also consider equipping her to compete for a place and scholarship \$\$\$\$ at places like Wheaton College in Illinois, Grove City College in Pennsylvania, or Cedarville College in Ohio -- all very selective Christian colleges with excellent reputations.

Cafi in CA



**Subject:** homeschooling highschool  
**Name:** jen  
**Time/Date:** 17:10:39 9/18/97  
**Message:**

Thanks Cafi. We are in touch with BJU and she has been "assigned" a person to work with her concerning credits etc. We hope to have her take the AP Biology test and the ACT this spring. BJU prefers the ACT. The SAT may come the next year.



**Subject:** Homeschool Highschool  
**Name:** jen  
**Time/Date:** 11:07:04 9/19/97  
**Message:**

She is volunteering at the local hospital which has been interesting. She is the first teen to be allowed on the acute care floor for the last nine years. The volunteer coordinator is in our corner. Others are unsure. When she turns 16 she can take the First Responders course for our Volunteer Fire Department. She is saving for that. BJU has sent us the info on their 4 yr. nursing program. I am trying to keep up with all the info. It helps to glean from others who have been there.



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## Subject of this thread: "Combining college classes & home"

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**Subject:** Combining college classes & home

**Name:** Sarah Acker

**Time/Date:** 08:10:03 9/18/97

**Message:**

Hi, Cafi and everyone!

This is my older son's (age 15) second year to audit (not for credit) college classes at the 4-year Christian liberal arts college where my husband is a foreign languages professor. KidOne is a bright student, and is reasonably self-motivated about his learning. What started out as a cautious experiment is turning into a juggernaut, though, and I'm faced with the necessity of translating college level achievement into high school transcript-speak. I think.

I'm aware that he can test out of some subjects, such as with AP and CLEP tests, but I don't want him to have to repeat anything he's already taken. Granted, some of the stuff he's taken has been for institutional credit only (lower level class designed to bring a college-age student up to college level, which we grabbed for him, e.g. algebra and intro to biology).

Do you know of any strategies with which to approach potential colleges (other than the one he's attending), to convince tests to be given AND credit to be granted? Transcripts from this current college only show attendance, not grades, so unless the instructors are contacted personally, we don't even get a grade. (Of course, I do contact them, and ask for two--one at college level, and one at high school level.)

Thanks, Cafi--

Sarah

who has KidTwo coming right along behind KidOne, but hopes to learn from experience with KidOne!



---

**Subject:** Credit for college level wor...

**Name:** cafi

**Time/Date:** 11:54:07 9/18/97

**Message:**

Hi Sarah --

You say your son has taken college level classes but not received college credit because he has audited the classes (is that right?). You also say that you don't want him to have to repeat anything when he goes to "real" college.

So much will depend on the policies of the college he attends -- and you might want to be shopping for one with that in mind. I think MOST colleges will simply use test-out policies for sequential subjects like math and foreign language. For example, there's no sense taking French I if the student can pass the French IV final. Almost all colleges will provide an opportunity to test out in these areas. SOME colleges will provide test-out opportunities in subjects like Biology and History. Of course, the test-out option generally does NOT generate credit, just the opportunity to take more advanced classes -- that is at MOST colleges -- again, shop around, and you may find something different.

If you want to generate credit so that your son begins college with one or two years under his belt, I think CLEP and/or AP are the best way to go. Again, you need to check with the college he will be attending to see which, if either, they accept.

For the remainder of your son's homeschooling high school career, I would suggest that you consider having him take his courses FOR CREDIT. I would also suggest interviewing counselors at target colleges he may apply to and learn what their policies are in this regard -- they will be all over the map, I guarantee you that!

For your son's high school transcripts, I would simply document ALL of them in the format described in my book. You husband works at a college, so translating homeschooling into educationese should be fairly easy.

Sarah, I am not certain I have entirely answered your question, so re-direct me if I have gotten off track !

Cafi



**Subject:** further elucidation  
**Name:** Sarah Acker  
**Time/Date:** 12:19:47 9/18/97  
**Message:**

Cafi, our situation is that our auditing is free, as a perk (one of the few that professors' families get). Starting to take classes for credit now would mean that he be formally enrolled (and we jump through the financial aid hoops), but the \*real\* problem is another perk: If he attends college at any of the member colleges of the Coalition of Christian Colleges and Universities, his tuition is free. The caveat, however, is that he has only eight consecutive semesters (not counting summers) to finish his BA.

We can't afford college any other way, and we realize that this is a great blessing to have , and a great blessing to have this problem, even! But it does effectively stymie our efforts now to afford credit, and that's why I'm anxious to pursue the testing-out route to its utmost. He's not ready to go away to school, and although I'm convinced he can handle the freshman and sophomore courses of study offered at his current college, I know he needs a few more background courses at the high school (or at least college at home) level--more science and math, and world history, for example. Languages, he's fine--he finished his high school requirement of two years of a language last year, by completing two semesters of a college-level German class (near or at the top of the class, I might add, and his dad being the professor had something to do with it--constant opportunity to practice at home!).

So, there are our fairly unique details. We're not the first family on this faculty to attempt this--I'll have to check with our predecessors to see what the repetition factor has been like for their daughter.

Any comments? Anyone?

Sarah



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**Subject:** Cafi's website link  
**Name:** Sarah Acker  
**Time/Date:** 08:38:52 9/18/97  
**Message:**

I thought I'd stick Cafi's website link here for your convenience!  
 It's <http://pages.prodigy.com/homeschool> , or you can click on the URL below.

Cafi's website contains a wealth of information on homeschooling the older student, as well as the first chapter and ordering information for her book, "What About College?" There's also information on testing, foreign languages, and a variety of other pages with a lot of great ideas.

Check it out!  
 Sarah



**Subject:** EXPERTS  
**Name:** cafi  
**Time/Date:** 11:58:47 9/18/97  
**Message:**

Hi Sarah --

I just wanted to add that I hope other homeschooling parents with teenagers and "graduated" homeschoolers will contribute their expertise here. I love speaking at homeschooling conferences and meeting parents whose experiences differ from ours. Many of them are better qualified to answer questions than I am.

Nobody can know it all -- and I invite ALL homeschooling parents with ideas on the topics raised to contribute to the discussion!

Cafi in CA



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**Subject:** Homeschool/Older Kids/Colleg...  
**Name:** cafi  
**Time/Date:** 11:41:33 9/18/97  
**Message:**

Hi Sarah -- Thanks for the plug.

Items people tell me are especially interesting at the site include five college application essays by homeschooled teenagers (with three more to be added next week), a Good News-Bad News page on college admissions for homeschoolers, my HEM articles on homeschooling older kids, a review of American School from a user perspective, and the first chapter of my book, which you mentioned. There's also a list of my favorite resources on my Meet The Author page.

Thanks for inviting me to do this forum. It's going to be GREAT!

Cafi



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**Subject:** Math help  
**Name:** Regina  
**Time/Date:** 09:03:58 9/18/97  
**Message:**

I'm currently tutoring/hsing my niece who is 19 and trying to finish high school. She has been accepted into a program in our junior college next spring, but must complete her GED by December to qualify. Here's my problem. I administered the Saxon placement test (from the net) and she did very poorly (less than Algebra 1). Given the limited amount of time available, what math program will give her what she needs to get through the GED? Then in the spring we can continue to work on her math skills. Regina P.S. Welcome back!!



**Subject:** Math for GED  
**Name:** cafi  
**Time/Date:** 11:37:23 9/18/97  
**Message:**

Hi Regina -- Run, don't walk, to a large bookstore or even a library and get a GED study guide (several different publishers -- almost any one will do). The study guide should contain a sample GED, which you can use to place her with respect to GED performance. Fortunately, the GED has VERY little algebra and geometry -- it's primarily advanced arithmetic. The study guide should also have remedial work to help her where her skills are not up to par. I'll bet there are even CD-ROM's which address this, which you buy at any large software store.

Good luck!

Cafi



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**Subject:** videos, too...  
**Name:** Sarah Acker  
**Time/Date:** 12:08:07 9/18/97  
**Message:**

Regina, don't forget the resources that might be available on your local PBS station. Mine runs GED prep courses in the early hours of the morning (sometimes listed in TV Guide), and their coverage is pretty thorough. Also, if I hadn't loaned them out, I'd have some GED-specific workbooks and videos I could send your way--from a literacy program that fell on its face a few years ago, and we homeschoolers got the leftovers and distributed them at the state convention. Ask at your county or state literacy office, too, and probably your adult education office can direct you to some materials.

Sarah



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-  [SPELLING](#), cafi, 12:39:41, 9/18/97

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**Subject:** spelling  
**Name:** karma  
**Time/Date:** 11:59:30 9/18/97  
**Message:**

I have a 12 year old who has very poor spelling. He has delexia, central-audio-processing disorder and adhd? Are there any good spelling programs that can help? I know it is kind of early, but I am worried he may have problems getting into college because of his disabilities. Any information would help.



**Subject:** SPELLING  
**Name:** cafi  
**Time/Date:** 12:39:41 9/18/97  
**Message:**

Hi Karma --

Rather than buying a spelling program, I would suggest that you consider working on words HE misspells in his own writing. Create lists from his journal or from his writing assignments. Work on a VERY few words each week (3-5). HOW you work on the words is VERY important. You need to address all possible learning styles -- visual/liguistic, auditory, kinesthetic, interpersonal, etc. (If this sounds like Greek, get Thomas Armstrong's excellent very readable book, In Their Own Way). In English, that means you need to drill the words in writing, orally, even by arranging magnetic letters on the refrigerator. Some kids respond VERY well to computer spelling-programs-as-games, so you may also want to check at your

local software store or even see what you can download for free. Lastly, if you decide to drill spelling and concurrently address multiple learning styles, I would suggest that, Saxon-like, you REVIEW frequently. In other words, during week one, work on words A, B, and C. For week two, do words A, B, C, D, and E. For week three, work on C, D, E, F, and G; for week four, A, B, F, G, and H -- and so on, reviewing some words for up to six months, if need be.

All this said, some kids, no matter what you do, will not be good spellers. Trust me, if that happens, your son will still be able to attend college and succeed there, if that is what he wants. There are rotten spellers in colleges all across the nation to prove my point. It's not a character failing or even much of a handicap. DO teach him -- by age 14 or 15, if not sooner -- how to use a spell checker on a word processor and he will be well equipped (this from the mother of a son who cannot write cursive but who just graduated from the US Air Force Academy).

Cafi in CA



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## Subject of this thread: "future concerns"

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**Subject:** future concerns

**Name:** Val

**Time/Date:** 13:36:54 9/18/97

**Message:**

Cafi,

I realize I may be getting ahead of myself, but this seemed a good opportunity to ask. I have a 6 year old son who is doing grade 3 work. At this rate, highschool won't be far away. I plan to keep homeschooling right through. My concern is how fast he is going. I try to just expand what he is learning, moving out (more at a grade two level) rather than up (to grades 3 and 4 type stuff). We are using Inge Cannon's Education Plus curriculum, so that is easy to do. Do I need to be concerned about him going too fast, in math for example? How do I deal with family and friends who ask what grade he is in? At what age do homeschooled kids graduate from highschool on average?



**Subject:** Going Too Fast? Enjoy The R...

**Name:** cafi

**Time/Date:** 15:41:07 9/18/97

**Message:**

Hi Val --

In my experience, homeschoolers on the average complete whatever they define as high school around ages 15-17, in other words, one to three years "early". This is not because homeschoolers or their parents are smarter than everyone else; it's simply due to the incredible efficiency of home education compared to that of traditional schools. Both of my kids finished high school at age 16, and I think that is fairly typical of homeschoolers.

Of course, I have known several homeschoolers who completed high school requirements by age 11 or 12. No big deal. Either way, homeschooled students can take advantage of this extra time by doing in-depth projects, community service, traveling, etc. And some do go on to college at these young ages, although that would never have been my choice for my kids.

Are you going too fast in math? That depends. Does he really Get It -- or is he just quick to memorize algorithms (procedures)? My preferred method of handling ALL math is equal doses of (1) some program and (2) recreational, mental, real life, hands-on, and unit study math. I have an article on this at my web site, should you want more details.

I don't think there should be a judgment of "too fast" or "too slow" applied to the activities of homeschoolers. Work with your kid where he is RIGHT NOW. The future will take of itself.

How do you answer questions about grade level? It guess it depends on the sincerity of the questioner and on your willingness to get into long explanations. The short, truthful answer would be: "We don't think in terms of grade level, he's \_\_\_\_\_ years old." Or how about, "If he were in school, he would be in grade \_\_\_\_\_." (That's the short, dismissive answer .) Sometimes your questioners just want assurance that he is achieving, and you can always glowingly rattle off his superior test scores.

I know it is hard with an oldest child, but don't worry too much about the pace -- enjoy the ride!

Cafi in CA



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## Subject of this thread: "Looking for basic biology text...any ideas?"

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-  [Looking for basic biology text...](#), Mary, 14:41:52, 9/18/97
-  [Basic Biology Text](#), cafi, 15:51:56, 9/18/97

**Subject:** Looking for basic biology text...any ideas?

**Name:** Mary

**Time/Date:** 14:41:52 9/18/97

**Message:**

Cafi, I am looking for a basic biology text for my 8th grade daughter. We have always done interest-initiated unit studies for everything except math, so I am completely at a loss on how to locate a good, basic text. A friend asked a science teacher in an on-line discussion and he recommended a Prentiss Hall text and a Holt, Rinehart, ect. text. I would love to hear your, and anyone else's, input on this. We do not homeschool for religious reasons, so I would appreciate secular text recommendations. Thank you. Mary



**Subject:** Basic Biology Text

**Name:** cafi

**Time/Date:** 15:51:56 9/18/97

**Message:**

Hi Mary --

I like Biology The Easy Way published by Barron's. It's thorough and inexpensive (roughly \$10) and readily available in the study guide section of most large bookstores. It includes 4 or 5 versions of the SAT II Biology Test.

A good alternative is Biology Made Simple published by Doubleday. It's also very inexpensive, thorough, and includes some hands-on activities.

Good hands-on supplements for either book are:

Experiments in Biology by Janice Van Cleave  
The Amateur Naturalist by Gerald Durrell  
Almost any bird or tree or plant field guide  
Gardening

Check these materials out from your library to see if they would be helpful.

Cafi in CA



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## Subject of this thread: "Essay Writing"

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---

**Subject:** Essay Writing  
**Name:** Susan M  
**Time/Date:** 16:33:27 9/18/97  
**Message:**

Dear Cafi,

I recently finished reading "And What About College?", and want to thank you for a wonderful and encouraging book. My son is currently attending public high school half-time, as he decides in which direction he wants to go. After reading your book, I feel confident enough to homeschool him, if he so decides (I hope so!)

Now to the question: Although my son is taking math and science classes with juniors and sophomores, he is in freshman English and having some problems. Although an excellent reader, he has never enjoyed writing, and he is having some trouble with the essay writing required in English classes. He tends to give one or two quick examples and then wrap up his very short essay. Is there a good book or some other teaching material that we could use to help him learn to write good, in-depth essays? I know this will be important clear through college and want to help him.

Thanks!

Susan



**Subject:** Writing  
**Name:** cafi  
**Time/Date:** 18:08:58 9/18/97  
**Message:**

Hi Susan --

Glad you found the book useful. I know you and your son will do fine.

I just submitted a column to Home Education Magazine for the November-December issue about teenagers and writing. Absolute best resource I can point you to is the book *In The Middle: Writing, Reading, and Learning With Adolescents* by Nancie Atwell. Book has been out since the late 1980's, so should be available through your library. Other resources will be listed in my column.

Nancie Atwell was a middle school English teacher who threw out all the texts and artificial writing assignments and began helping students improve writing that they did for real world purposes. We did the same thing with our kids. We did NOT have them do essays on arcane topics, on things that they didn't care about. No term papers. No "reports." Instead our kids wrote for the 4-H and CAP newsletters and various contests. They kept journals, they wrote to friends, snail mail and e-mail. They created instructions for various projects. They captioned scrapbooks; they made lists. Our daughter did lots of creative writing simply because she loved it. Finally, they READ good writing; and we read lots of good writing aloud.

Net result? Both kids got "A's" in their college freshman English classes as well as in other college classes that required a lot of writing. Both kids are often asked for editing help by their friends. Don't think that copying school is a way to encourage good writing. If that were true, we'd have a nation of competent writers.

Cafi in CA



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## Subject of this thread: "Help-6th grade History!!"

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- .....

---

**Subject:** Help-6th grade History!!

**Name:** kreider

**Time/Date:** 16:34:47 9/18/97

**Message:**

I am posting this for a friend who is struggling with her 12 year old son. He doesn't want to do any history program she suggests. She doesn't want him to hate history, so she wants him to help decide, but he insists that it is all "boring". She even wrote up some unit studies but he says these are "boring", too. Please give me some suggestions for her.



---

**Subject:** reluctant

**Name:** GailS

**Time/Date:** 16:10:59 9/20/97

**Message:**

I would suggest a couple of things.  
First, what is he interested in? My boys are very interested in weapons. Eyewitness Weapons is a wonderful overview of weapons used throughout history (chronologically). They have many wonderful books that could be considered history.  
My second suggestion is to have the boy read one self-selected biography a month. Require no book report or other means of evaluation. Let him pick a book that looks interesting to him. The Wright Brothers, Davy Crockett, Kit Carson. Leif Erickson, General Patton, Jesse Owens, Babe Ruth...I can promise you that there will be a biography that relates to his interests. Gently discuss the book- throw

out a few questions that require more than a yes/no answer. Put up a completed timeline and have him take a look at it to place the biography into its historical setting. Many a child has been lured into loving history with this gentle approach.

I know there is much written on teaching history chronologically and that we are supposed to teach U.S. History in fifth grade and World History in sixth grade, but if we are doing nothing but making our children hate it, what is the point? When we look beyond these two choices, and begin to take in the big picture of Social Sciences, history starts to become more interesting. Think of Anthropology, Archaeology, Cultural Anthropology, and more. Also, the Discovery Channel runs a wonderful history series every semester. This one is the Modern Presidency. Hope this was some help...

GailS



---

**Subject:** 6th grade history

**Name:** KathyP

**Time/Date:** 10:45:44 9/20/97

**Message:**

I'm not sure what kind of history you are looking for, but my 6th grade son is enjoying 2 books related to history. One is "The Egypt Game" by Zilpha Keatley Snyder. I found that the Core Knowledge home page has a lesson plan full of ideas of how you can elaborate on the subject. I'll put the URL below. He's also having fun with a book put out by The Princeton Review called American History Smart Junior, Exploring America's Past for Grades 6-8 by James L. Alouf. It involves time travelling kids and cats dropping in on different moments in history.



---

**Subject:** 6th grade history

**Name:** Elaine

**Time/Date:** 18:22:07 9/18/97

**Message:**

Has she tried Beautiful Feet's Guides to.....? These are very good and my children do not think they are boring. Jen may be right. It could be a discipline problem that needs to be dealt with first. He might just be saying that to get out of work. If that is the case, I would give him manual work to do. Tell him if he doesn't want an education, then the only job he'll probably get is manual labor--then give him some! Raking leaves, washing baseboards, scrubbing floors, etc. Maybe schoolwork won't be so "boring" after all!!

Elaine



---

**Subject:** History

**Name:** cafi

**Time/Date:** 18:18:38 9/18/97

**Message:**

Hi!

We never really used a history program but instead did lots of history with:

- (1) Videos (TV Documentaries or from the library) and discussion;;
- (2) Games, especially those from Aristoplay;
- (3) Family discussions of current events -- leading, of course, to How Did This Happen? (History);
- (4) Practice for contests like the National Geographic Geography Bee.

I have known kids who were VERY resistant to history to be enthralled with the history of something they are interested in -- say, a favorite sport. And others like history if they can play a computer game related to it.

Certainly your friend needs to decide, for herself, exactly how much history will be sufficient. We did an amazing amount with the above resources.

Cafi in CA



**Subject:** 6th grade history

**Name:** jen

**Time/Date:** 17:14:14 9/18/97

**Message:**

Just a thought: Is this a discipline problem? or total don't care syndrome? or lack of motivation? I find in many families I know that the kids will call it boring no matter what you do. I hope this is not the case for your friend. By the way, boring is a swear word in my house.



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- 

**Subject:** colleges

**Name:** babsi

**Time/Date:** 16:51:35 9/18/97

**Message:**

Hi Cafi! My fourteen yr old son, gr. 9, is hs again after giving the public school curriculum a try via correspondence. We live in Canada where the colleges are reluctant to accept hs without formal diploma. If he wants to attend college or university, we'd be prepared to have him go to the US, BUT: would the colleges there accept him as a hs? I've heard that people register themselves as a school in order to be able to issue an official diploma but not paid much attention to it while it was irrelevant. Now time seems to be ticking away. Thanks for any info you may have.

Barb



**Subject:** College Admissions  
**Name:** cafi  
**Time/Date:** 18:22:22 9/18/97  
**Message:**

Hi Barb --

Colleges in the US generally don't care about a high school diploma at all. What they do care about is thorough documentation of the high school program. My book describes how to create this documentation. Information about the book is at:  
<http://pages.prodigy.com/homeschool>

Good luck with your son.

Cafi in CA



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---

**Subject:** 520+ Colleges for Homeschoolers

**Name:** kmbunday

**Time/Date:** 17:16:09 9/18/97

**Message:**

This is posted by way of saying thanks to Cafi, who had a big part in supporting the online resource mentioned below.

The latest revision of the School Is Dead, Learn in Freedom! site's Colleges That Admit Homeschoolers FAQ page has just been posted on the World Wide Web. Its address is

[http://www.concentric.net/~kmbunday/colleges\\_4\\_hmsc.html](http://www.concentric.net/~kmbunday/colleges_4_hmsc.html)

I owe a big thank you to the many people who have sent me information by E-mail or postal mail to keep the FAQ accurate. Those people include readers of that Web page, participants on the College Tips for Homeschoolers and Home Educators message board ([www.kaleidoscapes.com/colleges/](http://www.kaleidoscapes.com/colleges/)), discussants in various USENET newsgroups, and members of various E-mail mailing lists. Many college officers have answered my questions in phone interviews or have written to me after seeing the link to the Colleges That Admit Homeschoolers FAQ on Yahoo's College Entrance Directory ([www.yahoo.com/Education/Higher\\_Education/College\\_Entrance/](http://www.yahoo.com/Education/Higher_Education/College_Entrance/)). At least one of those college officers is contemplating a research project surveying the experiences of homeschoolers in college using the results of my research, something I strongly encourage. Journalists are also using the Colleges That Admit Homeschoolers FAQ as a research resource.

The Colleges That Admit Homeschoolers FAQ page is one of the

helpful online resources for homeschoolers mentioned in the July-August 1997 Home Education magazine. It is listed as an online resource for homeschoolers in newly published books by experienced homeschoolers, and has always included the most accurate, up-to-date, and comprehensive list available of colleges known to have admitted homeschoolers. The Colleges That Admit Homeschoolers FAQ has been plagiarized, but never equaled. Accept no substitutes. (The Home School Legal Defense Association [HSLDA] list of colleges that have admitted homeschoolers is original, and I link to it from the Colleges That Admit Homeschoolers FAQ. But the HSLDA list is smaller and has less additional information for parents than the Colleges That Admit Homeschoolers FAQ. No other colleges for homeschoolers page on the Web is original, not one. HSLDA and I now share information with each, other by written agreement. HSLDA lists some unaccredited colleges; I choose not to.) Be sure to link to the Colleges That Admit Homeschoolers FAQ

[http://www.concentric.net/~kmbunday/colleges\\_4\\_hmsc.html](http://www.concentric.net/~kmbunday/colleges_4_hmsc.html)

if you have a Web page, and tell your friends about it. More than 260 colleges are fully confirmed as having admitted one or more homeschoolers, on the basis of reliable information, and more than 520 colleges in total in four different countries (and a United States college located with a campus located in Switzerland) are listed as being reported as welcoming, having admitted, or enrolling homeschooled applicants. More than 160 of the confirmed colleges are "selective" colleges such as the Ivy League or "Oxbridge" universities or various state universities, liberal arts colleges, or polytechnics with national reputations for excellence. More than 390 of the colleges that appear on the Colleges That Admit Homeschoolers FAQ now appear with Web page links so you can surf right over to information about the colleges on the World Wide Web.

I hope you enjoy the Colleges That Admit Homeschoolers FAQ. If you have questions or comments about this Web page, please write to me at [bunda002@tc.umn.edu](mailto:bunda002@tc.umn.edu), or follow the [mailto: link](mailto:bunda002@tc.umn.edu) from the page.

Karl M. Bunday (never homeschooled--alas!) University of Minnesota  
B.A. '80, J.D. '90

[bunda002@tc.umn.edu](mailto:bunda002@tc.umn.edu)



---

**Subject:** Colleges That Admit Homescho...

**Name:** cafi

**Time/Date:** 18:10:40 9/18/97

**Message:**

This IS a super WEB site folks. Don't miss it!

Cafi in CA



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## Subject of this thread: "SAT"

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- 

**Subject:** SAT

**Name:** Sis

**Time/Date:** 21:05:47 9/18/97

**Message:**

Could you explain the SAT for me? I thought it was THE test that you took to give a college an idea of where to place you. But now, I keep hearing about taking it even in grammar school; taking it every year; taking it several times in high school??? Is this THE SAT they're talking about?



**Subject:** SAT

**Name:** cafi

**Time/Date:** 11:40:09 9/19/97

**Message:**

Hi Sis -- As Sarah wrote, there are two separate tests which happen to have the same initials:

Stanford Achievement Test (like the ITBS, CAT, CTBS and others may be given every year -- has little/nothing to do with college entrance)

Scholastic Aptitude Test I (a college entrance test, required by SOME colleges for evaluation for admissions; the other widely used test is the ACT).

Some kids take the Scholastic Aptitude Test as young as grade 6 or 7 for admissions to special programs like Talent Search, offered by various universities. Most commonly, though, kids take the SAT 1-3 times in grades 11 and 12.

Cafi in CA



---

**Subject:** SAT/ACT schedule  
**Name:** Marci  
**Time/Date:** 15:29:21 9/19/97  
**Message:**

Cafi,

I have a question about WHEN to take the SAT and/or ACT. My oldest will be 16 in December and is taking classes full time at the local Jr College. The plan is to get his AA there and then move on to a four year college (at this point we don't know where). He'll be taking the California High School Proficiency Exam this fall and will be 'graduated'

I guess it's really two questions: Under these circumstances will he need the SAT? And when should he take it? My thinking is he may need it as a requirement for scholarships. Going by his age/grade as relative to public school he'd take it his 'senior' year, right? That would be next year, but that will also be his second year at the Jr College. Does any of that timing matter?

Marci in CA

PS. Where in CA are you?



---

**Subject:** SAT Timing  
**Name:** cafi  
**Time/Date:** 17:59:00 9/19/97  
**Message:**

Hi Marci --

I am in Arroyo Grande, about 15 minutes south of San Luis Obispo, about 90 minutes north of Santa Barbara.

In your son's case, he will probably be applying to college as a transfer student. As such, he may not need an SAT score for admissions. On the other hand, as you pointed out, he MAY need the score for scholarships. If I were in your shoes, here's what I would do RIGHT NOW. Call the admissions offices of the colleges to which he will be

applying and ask them if he will need the SAT as a transfer student with X units. Then ask to be transferred to the financial aid offices of the colleges and ask them the same question. Always get your information from the horse's mouth.

Cafi in CA



---

**Subject:** SAT scores  
**Name:** Marci  
**Time/Date:** 02:58:30 9/20/97  
**Message:**

The biggest problem here is that at this point he doesn't have a clue where he might go in 2 years. Over the next few months I do hope to help him search out some college catalogs and start figuring out his priorities. He does have a clear goal for his long term career and major, so that helps!

I was hoping you'd been transferred to Travis AFB, practically in my backyard

Thanks!

Marci



---

**Subject:** SAT  
**Name:** cafi  
**Time/Date:** 13:06:33 9/20/97  
**Message:**

Hi Marci --

Travis would have been my husband's next AF assignment -- but he opted for retirement instead.  
Even though your son has no idea where he will attend college, on Monday call the admissions and financial aid offices of 3-5 Bay area colleges -- 2 or 3 state institutions and 2 or 3 private ones. How about San Francisco State, Golden Gate U, Univ of CA, Santa Clara U, and Stanford? That should give you a feel for what you will be facing -- and perhaps save you time and money involved in SAT prep & testing.

Cafi in CA



---

**Subject:** SAT and SAT  
**Name:** Sarah Acker

**Time/Date:** 07:21:37 9/19/97

**Message:**

Sis, there are two separate categories here.

The one given to assess college potential is the Scholastic Achievement Test, and that can be taken by anyone (talented seventh graders, for example) but is usually administered to high school juniors. Students may and do take it several times to try to better their scores.

The elementary school test happens to have the same initials, but is a separate testing instrument altogether. It's the Stanford Achievement Test, and like Dawn says, is a yearly, grade-specific test. I think there are junior high versions of the Stanford, but I'm not positive that's the one I remember taking back in the mists of my own seventh grade 30 years ago ;-).

Sarah



**Subject:** Sat

**Name:** Dawn

**Time/Date:** 01:18:33 9/19/97

**Message:**

It is a grade specific test like the CAT and the Iowa test, and administered the same way. We chose the SAT for the yearly testing of our children required here in WA.



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## Subject of this thread: "All the bases..."

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 [All The Bases](#), cafi, 10:57:17, 9/19/97

**Subject:** All the bases...

**Name:** Sis

**Time/Date:** 21:10:26 9/18/97

**Message:**

My computer's doing strange things! I'll try posting this again.

Sometimes I feel like we're not doing enuf. I sent 3 kids back to public school to graduate because I didn't feel like I could do high school. This time I want to DO it! I'm not worried about math, history, or Spanish. BUT, English, sciences, government, civics, economics, (what other classes do "they" take that I'm not covering?), etc! How do I know that she's learning the things that she needs to know?



**Subject:** All The Bases

**Name:** cafi

**Time/Date:** 10:57:17 9/19/97

**Message:**

Hi!

How do you know they are learning What They Need To Know? You don't. And sending them to school doesn't alleviate that problem. If you send them to school, they will be exposed to that particular school's scope and sequence of information (maybe), a scope and sequence which probably doesn't bear any resemblance to the scope and sequence in the next district.

There is NO definitive list of who learns what when, especially for high school. Since there is no definitive list, no particular scope and sequence can be said to be complete. Where does that leave homeschooling parents dealing with subjects in which they feel they have no expertise? They can develop their own list of essentials based

on their formal and informal education and on their life experiences. Or they can adopt somebody else's scope and sequence (who learns what when).

If you feel VERY unsure about particular areas (e.g. government, history), you and your kid may feel most comfortable using correspondence courses for those topics. I have a list of correspondence schools at my website, complete with WEB links (<http://pages.prodigy.com/homeschool>).

I'll tell you up front that with our two teenagers, we certainly did not cover All The Bases. Why? Because I never could find a definition of All The Bases. And, I couldn't see the purpose of dragging my kids away from something they were enthusiastically pursuing on their own to study something some educrat thought was important for everyone to know.

Cafi in CA

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-  [FOR SURE Courses](#), cafi, 11:10:32, 9/19/97

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**Subject:** Pretty much the same as Sis.....

**Name:** KC

**Time/Date:** 21:48:36 9/18/97

**Message:**

I am hsing my 11th grade son and am not worried about the basics -- English, science, math, etc -- as there are so many good curricula. But, I feel that I'm not focused on the "electives." We do/have done art appreciation, music appreciation, logic, Latin. Is the point of electives giving the student an awariness of the options, or should we be more focused? Are there any FOR SURE courses that should be introduced?



---

**Subject:** FOR SURE Courses

**Name:** cafi

**Time/Date:** 11:10:32 9/19/97

**Message:**

Hi KC --

FOR SURE courses? I don't think so. We each have our own list of essentials. Those lists differ from each other -- and that's OK. On my list were the following:

- Character Development
- Daily Language Arts (Reading and Writing)
- Math (including Consumer Math)
- Physical Fitness (Includes nutrition)
- Computer literacy
- Community service

With those skills, I felt the kids could do anything else they wanted to do. For college entrance, our kids also spent some time on history,

government, foreign language, and fine arts plus extracurriculars that ranged from piloting an airplane to setting props for community drama groups. I think HOW your kids explore topics and projects is much more important than accumulating what looks like a well-rounded list of resume items.

Whatever you do, don't restrict your kid's activities to those on a typical high school transcript. We included things like aerospace and aviation, independent living skills, electronics, music theory, and much more. Let your kid's interests drive the selection of extras, and the final result will be impressive.

If you are concerned about college entrance, DO contact colleges of interest NOW. Ask about their requirements, and ask what special documentation they require of homeschoolers.

Cafi in CA

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## Subject of this thread: "High school programs"

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  -  [Independent Study Schools](#), cafi, 11:45:21, 9/19/97
- .....

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**Subject:** High school programs

**Name:** sharonh

**Time/Date:** 22:02:08 9/18/97

**Message:**

Cafi,

I have a son in 7th grade this year and since I plan to homeschool through high school I'm starting to look at high school programs. It's hard to believe that I'm to that point!!

We have always homeschooled and I've gone the gamut from the relaxed approach to Abeka Videos (in 3rd grade) to unit studies to tailoring my own. While all that was fun, this year we are doing Calvert 7th which both teacher and student absolutely love! At this point, we plan to continue with Calvert next year as well. I think the structure and balance of the program is good for both of us. I wish I had tried Calvert sooner.

My son, at this point, is not sure what he wants to do. He loves science and appears to be interested in something medical related. He is basically a well-rounded student. Strong interests have not emerged as yet (except for baseball!) so I'm thinking in terms of finding a good basic, interesting, academically sound course of study for high school.

I know that you used American School with your son and daughter. Now that there are more and more programs popping up, are there others out there that you would recommend? I feel like I know so little about the programs available and thought you might be able to enlighten me :o)

Sure appreciate you giving your time and expertise to this forum!

Sharon H.



---

**Subject:** Independent Study Schools

**Name:** cafi

**Time/Date:** 11:45:21 9/19/97

**Message:**

Hi Sharon --

If you haven't read it, I have a review of American School at my WEB site (<http://pages.prodigy.com/homeschool>). I also have a list of other independent-study diploma-granting schools at the site, complete with links -- and I have seen the materials from several of these programs. It's hard to give any one school a blanket recommendation, but my guess is that if you liked Calvert, you will also like Cambridge Academy in Florida. It is probably closest to Calvert in approach. American School is more watered down. Clonlara's approach is also GREAT; they either give you a curriculum to follow OR they encourage you to design your own -- in addition to offering on-line classes and support. Check out those two first -- Cambridge and Clonlara.

Cafi in CA



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## Subject of this thread: "motivation"

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-  [motivation](#), bconine, 09:58:49, 9/19/97
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-  [motivation](#), bconine, 18:08:50, 9/19/97
-  [Motivation](#), cafi, 22:57:22, 9/19/97

---

**Subject:** motivation  
**Name:** bconine  
**Time/Date:** 09:58:49 9/19/97  
**Message:**

I have a 15 year old enrolled in an umbrella school program. We have homeschooled 3 years and on our fourth here. We leaned toward a unit study approach until now. It has constantly been a problem to get my boy to do his work. Constantly checking up and motivating to do his best. Quite frankly some of his work was not very good. I would like to steer him towards more independent learning however when faced in any choices he is unable to see them through even though he is reminded this work was his choice. He wants to go back to school. Socialization is his reason. When suggesting sports involvement in the community or volunteering "No way "is his reply. Have any suggestions?



**Subject:** Motivation  
**Name:** cafi  
**Time/Date:** 11:54:50 9/19/97  
**Message:**

Hi!

Could you give me a sample of a typical day of homeschool for your son? How much time on academics and how exactly is he accomplishing academics?

Also, what outside-the-home activities does he currently engage in?  
What household chores is he required to do?

Lastly, does he have unlimited access to TV and video games?

Is part-time school attendance an option in your situation?

I will have suggestions when I hear about some of the above!

Cafi in CA



---

**Subject:** Re:motivation  
**Name:** bconine  
**Time/Date:** 13:31:33 9/19/97  
**Message:**

At the present moment this is my sons schedule

1. Science -one assignemnt is reading and answer questions usually about 5-6 questions or one experiment and write-up or an assignment manual (lots of formulas and practical,vocabulary questions) one page
2. Math - about 20 questions test on capter end
- 3.Social - about 30 pages reading with written assignments sprinkled with writing assignments from me .Short writing oly one or 2 essays per course.
4. computers- chapter reading and practical assignments.

He is restricted in t.v watching .None during the day .2 hours evening s only if assignments are done This has been a problem.  
we had to take all games off the computer so he could not play during school hours  
No other community activities other than bowling league



**Subject:** Motivation  
**Name:** cafi  
**Time/Date:** 17:52:45 9/19/97  
**Message:**

Hi!

You did not mention whether or not part-time school attendance is an option. I'll assume that it is not.

If he were mine, the first thing I would do would be to insist on some community service somewhere, the same way you insist on math. There are SO many ways to accomplish this -- libraries, hospitals, community drama groups, parks, churches, political campaigns, museums, zoos -- they ALL need help. At age 14, my kids were getting

out of the house a great deal more than your son -- every day, usually for 2-8 hours, depending on their schedules. In fact, it was all her activities that prevented my daughter from returning to school -- she would have had to drop some part of her community involvement, and she wasn't willing to do that, even though she had a keen desire to see more kids her own age every day. There's an article on volunteering at my WEB site that you may want to peruse.

Item #2. You also didn't mention if he has any consuming interests. If there is ANYTHING he likes to do with his spare time -- encourage that interest -- as long as it's legal . Don't worry about whether it is academic or not, as you can work out ways to call just about anything school. I know one computer game aficionado who now is designing computer games for a living. Most things that look like a waste of time are not necessarily a waste of time. Grace Llewellyn's book: The Teenage Liberation Handbook has a wealth of ideas for helping kids follow their interests in the larger community. Check it out.

Suggestion #3: Change his materials, perhaps just one subject at a time. I don't think anyone ever learned much history from doing worksheets. Instead play history games, watch & discuss history documentaries, discuss current events. There are plenty of ways to cover most subjects without texts and worksheets.

Suggestion #4: Have several discussions with him about:

(1) His goals and priorities for THIS YEAR -- what would he like to do/try (academic or non-academic) that he has never had the chance to do before -- rock climbing? cartooning? surfing? woodworking? flying? astronomy? animal care? spelunking? sailing? You need SOMETHING to motivate him in SOME direction. And you will need to talk to him -- perhaps several times -- to find out what that something is. Then help him pursue that something.

(2) His long range goals and priorities. College? Military? His own business? This is where some of the more boring parts of preparing for adulthood come into play. Once he begins to define his goals, he may begin to see WHY he has to learn keyboarding or geometry or correct English usage.

I hope we hear some other answers from other readers. This is an interesting topic.

Cafi in CA



**Subject:** motivation  
**Name:** bconine  
**Time/Date:** 18:08:50 9/19/97  
**Message:**

I have tried many of your suggestions. We do not do worksheets for social. The umbrella school teaches all other subjects but in that i am still teaching. He reads biographies and watches videos as you said. Science is the schools although here in Canada I have some option to edit working with the teacher. So we are trying to add some real books and experimentation. We have talked about long range and short range goals .He has to take a course here called Career and Life management. It includes budgeting career exploration and study skills. I have determined he is interested in sales or business management and gearing to take some business courses next semester. His community involvement in an heated discussion for the moment as it is not required by the school. He sees no need for it. His time with friend (nonhomeschool ) is the only time he gets out other than bowling. Many chages in course materials results in him not liking it any better than the original. It cost in Latin materials (not used ) 2 science programs used barly etc.etc, I will lokk at your other alternatives. Part time school is not an option as he gravitates to people of questionable character and generally does not do enough now.



---

**Subject:** Motivation

**Name:** cafi

**Time/Date:** 22:57:22 9/19/97

**Message:**

Interesting discussion! I have a few follow-ups:

- (1) How about a volunteer or perhaps even a PAID job at the bowling alley?
- (2) You are right. You have tried LOTS of materials, and, frankly, it doesn't sound to me like he is over-curricularized -- unless the stuff takes him longer than 2 hours daily when he is working hard on it. One thing I guess I might try with some of the curricular materials you now have is working on at least one subject WITH him. I mean really with him. Whatever he does, you do, in tandem. Math would be a good choice for this. You work with him EVERY day on this subject until he realizes you are slowing him down and tells you to "get lost". Worked with both my kids and takes anywhere from 2 weeks to a year, depending on the kid and the subject.
- (3) Another tactic tried (through no choice) by a very famous homeschooling family (David & Micki Colfax, authors of Homeschooling for excellence) is keeping the kid SO busy with hard physical work around the house and yard that he starts to look forward to study time as a chance to "rest". This also worked at my son's college (the US Air Force Academy), where students welcomed study time as freedom from monotonous marches and hard physical exercise.

Hang in there. I don't know how many parents would in a similar situation. As tough as your son is now, I can promise you two things:  
(1) He won't be like this forever; next year will be an entirely different set of challenges and rewards ! and  
(2) When he's an adult, he will thank you many times over.

Cafi in CA



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## Subject of this thread: "New Homeschooler Needs Help"

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**Subject:** New Homeschooler Needs Help

**Name:** jackied

**Time/Date:** 13:21:35 9/19/97

**Message:**

Cafi,

I have recently decided to homeschool my 14 year old daughter. Can you give some advice on how to select books, software, etc. What should I be looking for when I select materials? Do the materials need to be high school certified and include tests. Or do we sometimes have to make up our own tests? If the materials are not high school certified, how do I they include the things she needs to learn?

Thank you in advance for your help. Jackie



**Subject:** New Homeschooler

**Name:** cafi

**Time/Date:** 17:30:34 9/19/97

**Message:**

Hi Jackie -- I -- and probably many others here -- can give you advice on books and materials if we can narrow the field by having you answer a few questions:

- (1) What state are you in? Do you have any specific state requirements to satisfy?
- (2) Would you classify your daughter as a good, fair, or poor student with respect to academics?
- (3) What are your goals for your daughter's homeschooling?

- (4) What are your daughter's goals for her homeschooling?
- (5) Is college in her future plans?
- (6) Are you looking for secular or religious materials?
- (7) Are you on a tight budget?

Cafi in CA



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## Subject of this thread: "writing"

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**Subject:** writing

**Name:** karma

**Time/Date:** 15:42:18 9/19/97

**Message:**

Thanks for the advice earlier. You mentioned to use his writing and have him practice what words he spells wrong. I can not get him to write at all. This is my first year home schooling and when he was in public school they just let him get by with out him doing anything. What should he be learning in the 6th? How can I encourage him to write or are there any good writing programs? How much time should he be spending on each subject? I got a few books that explains this but they all seems to have very different views.



**Subject:** Writing

**Name:** cafi

**Time/Date:** 18:10:45 9/19/97

**Message:**

Hi Karma --Yes, there are several good writing programs around. I have talked to different people who have had success with Easy Writing (Wanda Phillips) and Writing Strands. We never used a program. And I suspect most programs don't work with kids who are as writing-phobic as you describe your son. If he were mine, I would start him with a daily journal. The journal can be a bed-to-bed narrative of the previous day or a description of a special event the previous day. We're talking about working up to generating 2-3 paragraphs each morning (about 150-250 words, maybe the amount that would fit on a single side of a sheet of lined paper). Many boys your son's age find

the process of putting pencil to paper EXTREMELY off-putting. Therefore, to break him in, I suggest that you have him DICTATE the journal to you for several months, at least. That's right, he talks, you write (or type, if you prefer). Date each entry and keep the pages in a binder (in no time at all, he'll enjoy reviewing the binder). After 3-6 months, have him begin to write the entries once weekly and then every other day, working up to every day within 12-18 months. When he starts putting pen to paper (or keyboarding -- equally acceptable), you will have your spelling words. Until then, don't work on spelling EXCEPT to see that he reads good books. The first part of becoming a good speller is learner to recognize correctly spelled words so that the incorrectly spelled words look out of place. My son (now graduated from college) is an example of a kid who never would write ANYTHING until he could use a typewriter keyboard. Substitute a keyboarding course (Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing is good) for the spelling time right now. That will probably take you out of the journaling loop that much sooner. Cafi in CA



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-  [Just starting 6th grade](#), debimom, 12:20:33, 9/20/97

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**Subject:** Just starting 6th grade  
**Name:** debimom  
**Time/Date:** 21:57:35 9/19/97  
**Message:**

Hi Cafi,  
I have just started homeschooling my sons.  
As a single working mom it is pretty hard,  
but my son in Gr 6 is driving me crazy.  
He doesn't want to do anything. I would like to try unit studies or a  
more relaxed approach, but am unsure how. Also, I live in PA and we  
are so regulated, is any of this possible?  
Thanks so much,  
Debbie



**Subject:** Beginning With Grade 6  
**Name:** cafi  
**Time/Date:** 22:40:39 9/19/97  
**Message:**

Debbie -- Working and homeschooling IS an ambitious undertaking. I know. That is EXACTLY how we began -- with me teaching piano 3/4's time and also attending classes at the local U. I WAS fortunate in that my kids were SO grateful to have been freed from school and given their lives back that they were fairly compliant the first year (that changed, of course ); I was also lucky that I lived in a relatively unregulated state (New Mexico).

It sounds like you and your son will have to bow to some of the realities of the situation if you are to succeed. Did he want to be homeschooled? If so, USE that. Carefully explain to him, every day, if

necessary, that it is not you personally who is insisting on X,Y,Z but big brother, the state of Pennsylvania. And, of course, to maintain your status as homeschoolers you ALL need to obey the law.

I also assume that you are not necessarily present to directly oversee his activities. Like all kids in similar positions, this means he will have to grow up a little faster with respect to assuming personal responsibility. Not a terrible thing, just something that has to be explained to him, probably several times.

All that said, I know MANY homeschoolers in PA who are NOT textbook-bound, who are doing wonderful, creative things with their homeschooling. I think you can incorporate and learn to document those types of things just like other PA homeschoolers do. And I think you can find the time to learn about these alternatives and HOW to document them if you do it piecemeal -- a little at a time.

What do I mean? Set as your goal finding an alternative for your son's most hated subject for the next two months. Then explore alternatives through research and most especially by talking with other homeschoolers. Make your son aware that you are looking for others way to do X and listen to your son's suggestions as well. After you have "fixed" subject X, move on over the following two months to subject Y. And so on.

Nobody homeschools perfectly. In our case, with our two kids, we probably did more things wrong than right. Homeschooling, fortunately, gives you the opportunity to fix mistakes as soon as you discover them.

Why did you decide to homeschool?

Cafi in CA



---

**Subject:** Just starting 6th grade

**Name:** debimom

**Time/Date:** 12:20:33 9/20/97

**Message:**

Hi Cafi,  
Thanks for the reply. I had been learning and praying to homeschool my boys since I learned of homeschooling when Ryan was in first grade. I didn't feel a great push to do it because of my situation, and because I felt that a private school would be just fine. I started homeschooling because of many reasons. First of all, I saw both my sons caring more about the newest fads than their

schoolwork. They are both 1st honor students and my older son Ryan (6th Grade) would get things wrong on purpose just to "fit in". I realize this is probably a minor problem, but on top of everything else . . .

They were always bored in school. They were enrolled in a private Catholic school but very little religion was taught, some of which was incorrect, sex education was being taught in the classroom, classes were mixed;

slow, extremely slow children mixed in with everyone else. Sometimes they would be on one question for a week. All this combined with their "friends". Ryan has become quite a follower. To top it all, the tuition was rising faster than my pay increases. They had some teachers who were not certified, actually one is just a secretary, but I was paying top dollar to have her instruct my sons. I knew I could do better.

Thanks,  
Debbie



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**Subject:** doing it over  
**Name:** mango  
**Time/Date:** 07:27:25 9/20/97  
**Message:**

Cafi,

If you had it to do over again, what would you do differently? Would you still choose the same route for high school for your children?



---

**Subject:** Doing It Over  
**Name:** cafi  
**Time/Date:** 13:11:34 9/20/97  
**Message:**

If I had it to do over, we would not use American School courses. Instead, for my academic son, we would have used community college courses; he probably could have had an AA degree at 17. For my interpersonal, hands-on learner, my daughter, we probably would use Clonlara in Michigan.

Also, if I had it to do over, I would have insisted on foreign language exposure, training, etc as YOUNG as possible. This would have included videos, games, friends who speak the foreign language, plus trips to countries where the language is spoken.

Those are the principal changes I would make. Other things -- interest initiated learning for language arts, history, geography, even science, I would leave as is. And I would definitely use Saxon Math again.

Cafi in CA



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## Subject of this thread: "certificate of mastery"

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-  [test](#), Lisa, 17:48:47, 9/20/97

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**Subject:** certificate of mastery  
**Name:** kjp  
**Time/Date:** 09:24:50 9/20/97  
**Message:**

My children are 12 and 14. Goals 2000 talks about a certificate of mastery. Do you know how that will affect our children? What is a certificate of mastery?




---

**Subject:** certificate of mastery  
**Name:** Cherie Carroll  
**Time/Date:** 18:00:45 9/20/97  
**Message:**

Where can one read the proposed goals for the certificate of mastery?




---

**Subject:** Certificate of Mastery  
**Name:** cafi  
**Time/Date:** 13:18:29 9/20/97  
**Message:**

I hope the proposed certificate of mastery programs NEVER effect our homeschool children. The basic idea here, as far as I understand it, is that the we're-here-to-help-you government will require certificates of mastery (anything from basic reading and math through practicing medicine) for entrance into almost ANY job. Certificates of mastery are also linked with the phrase school to work, that is, you can't go to

work unless you go to school first. The certificate will ONLY be obtainable by putting in so much seat time in an appropriate school and/or by taking a standardized test.

I support ANY efforts to fight certificate-of-mastery and school to work legislation. After all, homeschoolers prove daily that ordinary people (read: people without teaching credentials) can produce exceptional citizens. Why do we need to regulate and tax everything?????

Cafi in CA



---

**Subject:** Certificates of Mastery  
**Name:** Susan M  
**Time/Date:** 13:55:08 9/20/97  
**Message:**

These are being phased in here in Oregon. Supposedly in 10th grade a student will earn the Certificate of Initial Mastery (CIM), then go on to earn the Certificate of Advanced Mastery (CAM) instead of a diploma. There has been a lot of controversy over these, and so far diplomas are still being offered. It will be interesting to see what happens. This year 8th graders took tests to see if they had reached the "benchmarks" that would show they were on schedule to receive the CIM in two years. Well over half the 8th graders were below standard. What will happen if that many flunk in 10th grade??? Will they lower the standards or what? I am really curious.

So far this does not affect homeschoolers in Oregon, although that could change, I suppose. Oh, CIM is determined not just by the test--that is just for math and language arts--but also by development of a portfolio of work in all subjects.

Susan



---

**Subject:** test  
**Name:** Lisa  
**Time/Date:** 17:48:47 9/20/97  
**Message:**

You if get a chance take a list at the proposed goals for the certificate.It's SCARY!!! A lot about citizenship and living skills and other things they have no business in. I've read that by using the word learners instead of students, they could test adults who can't find or keep a job and require them to earn the certificate.



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## Subject of this thread: "Low Test Scores"

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**Subject:** Low Test Scores  
**Name:** lynn  
**Time/Date:** 09:49:37 9/20/97  
**Message:**

Help!!! I need some advice. I am teaching my 7th grader this year for the first time. He has been public schooled up until now. He begged my husband to let him be homeschooled. But now he has been really discouraged by his test scores. I am using BJUP for history, science and health. He likes the material, but when I give him a test he scores in the 50's or 60's. He is at the point of tears and afraid that his dad will put him back in PS. He really has been studying and seems to know the material. I'm not sure what the problem is. I was considering letting him see the test the day before so that he would know what to study. I'm not quite sure if that would really be fair or not. Any advice would be greatly appreciated!!!! I really would like to help him succeed. Thanks a bunch.

Through His Grace, Lynn



---

**Subject:** Test Scores  
**Name:** cafi  
**Time/Date:** 13:35:36 9/20/97  
**Message:**

Hi Lynn --

Use the curriculum, don't let the curriculum use you. I like many of the suggestions already made, among them, don't give the tests, do the tests differently (orally), give different tests of your own making, use informal discussion as an evaluation method (my preferred approach).

We also seldom/never gave tests. If the kid didn't get something I thought was essential, we just continued to work on it until he got it. Of course, my list of essentials was VERY short -- in other words most things we found in textbooks were not make or break.

Take out the last test your son took. YOU take the test. How did you do? Do you really need the knowledge contained in the test to function as an adult? Does scoring 90 or 100 percent on the test mean your character is intact? Or does it mean you have added to your trough of Jeopardy trivia? Just how badly does your son -- or anyone for that matter -- need to know what is on these tests to succeed in life?

Cafi in CA



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**Subject:** low test scores  
**Name:** LaurieM  
**Time/Date:** 12:11:24 9/20/97  
**Message:**

I've been hsing for 10 years and I never "test" my kids, except for the standardized testing in the spring. Even then, I let them know that the purpose of the testing is diagnostic - to see what we need to work on.

As an hs mom, I am constantly talking to my girls about what they are reading and learning, so I know whether they are getting it or not. We score math and written assignments, then review and correct errors because our goal is mastery, not grades.

The very first year I homeschooled, my oldest,now 17, affirmed me in this approach when she said, "It's so much easier to learn this way. I feel so depressed when I do my very best and still don't get a good score on a test."

BTW, I have used BJU history texts as a "jumping-off point" and a guideline for our studies. I really like the "Things to Do" ideas at the ends of the chapters. Sometimes we read the text, sometimes not, but we never give the tests.

I hope this is encouraging to you - please e-mail if you would like to discuss further.



**Subject:** BJU history tests

**Name:** Sarah Acker  
**Time/Date:** 11:39:45 9/20/97  
**Message:**

Hi, Lynn--

We've been using BJU World Studies, too, and found that the best way of testing for my son was to give him the questions orally. We discuss the discussion questions orally, and do the tests orally, too. Certainly you don't have to give him all of the questions on all of the tests, either.

However, my best tactic for getting the information into him is to supplement with lots of library books, videos, and activities when I can find them. Keeping a timeline going might help, too. Actually, I'm to the point (halfway through the text) where I'm considering jettisoning the text altogether, and structuring my own for the remainder of the year (we started this book last year).

Consider not testing him at all, or at least just using the testbank questions as summaries--sort of, "Let's find out how much you remember, and forget the scores" kind of thing.

Sarah



**Subject:** Test scores  
**Name:** Sis  
**Time/Date:** 11:29:48 9/20/97  
**Message:**

This is part of the school at home approach. Why would we, as parents, grade our kids? (I did it too BTW!) Now, I realize that the reason you correct a math test is to see what you're getting and what you're not, right? So, we correct it, (NO GRADE), then go back and see what's wrong and work out the one's that were missed. If there's a concept that's not caught, we'll work on that. We don't HAVE to "get thru the book" in a year. It's more important to know and understand the work. If he seems to know it and is getting poor "grades" then maybe he's making copying mistakes or something?  
Getting better grades (at public school) may mean that the work wasn't as challenging - just a thought.



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**Subject:** test scores  
**Name:** kjp  
**Time/Date:** 10:03:56 9/20/97  
**Message:**

I am a first timer too at homeschooling. I started in April. My son was not a reader. I wanted him to enjoy reading and learning. The first

thing I told both of my children was to read as much as possible but there would be NO book reports. Since April, my son is reading an average of a book a week and he really enjoys reading. As for test, except for math /spelling, we don't give test. The children read the work and then orally give us a small 15 minute report about what they learned. If the material is difficult, I let them take the book's test and answer the questions as they read that chapter in the book. I want them to enjoy learning. That is why I took them out of the ps. My son is a 7th grader too. He was not happy in the public school. He is a lot happier learning at home and he is doing very well. His happiness in these formative years is very important.



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**Subject:** tests

**Name:** Jean

**Time/Date:** 17:18:22 9/20/97

**Message:**

My 7th grade daughter does her math with the answer key handy. She works out a problem and then checks to see if she got it right. If not, she tries again. Oh yes, she keeps a post-it note over the next answer so she doesn't accidentally see it too soon. As far as tests in other subjects go, I let her do those "open book" as a learning exercise. As she has a problem with word recall this works well for her. No grades--we're out for learning here and I think grades are an artificial means of coping with large numbers of students!



**Subject:** Thanks to All !!!

**Name:** lynn

**Time/Date:** 17:33:50 9/20/97

**Message:**

Thanks to all of you who answered my post. You are all a blessing and an encouragement.

In His Love, Lynn



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## Subject of this thread: "Need math advice PLEASE!"

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**Subject:** Need math advice PLEASE!

**Name:** Katielady

**Time/Date:** 10:19:16 9/20/97

**Message:**

Cafi, I have a problem that I hope you and other mothers of older kids can help me with. My son has several learning disabilities that I have proudly watched him fight and deal with over the years. He also is a sufferer of obsessive compulsive disorder for which he takes medication AND clinical depression--the problem with this disorder is for him it often triggers panic attacks. When we ended our school year last year the thought of doing math would trigger the panic. The funny thing is he knows how to do math, but the stress would cause a total block. NOW here's my problem. His psychiatrist suggested letting him use a calculator to do the math. (He'd be doing Saxon 7/6 this year--we haven't even opened the book yet)Is this a reasonable alternative for a child who has legitimate problems (these disorders aren't in his head they're biological in nature)and are kids allowed to use calculators in the big tests? (SAT mainly) and are they allowed to use them in college? His Dr. agreed that of course he needs to learn how to work on paper but once I knew that he knew the principle behind the problem to let him use the calculator. Sorry this is so long but I'm just so uncertain. I don't want him to develop a total phobia to math which is where I feel he's heading if the pressure can't be relieved. Any opinions would be appreciated--he's a 6th grader and incredibly bright despite and in spite of his disabilities and disorders



**Subject:** Get The Calculator

**Name:** cafi

**Time/Date:** 13:42:55 9/20/97

**Message:**

Katie --

Get the calculator, and don't think twice about it. Be sure and teach him the principal good calculator habit: Mental estimate ALWAYS precedes punching in the numbers!

Saxon will recommend the calculator beginning in Algebra I, anyway -- and that is your son's next book.

Cafi in CA



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**Subject:** educating with LDs

**Name:** LaurieM

**Time/Date:** 12:42:37 9/20/97

**Message:**

I'm not Cafi, but I have been in your shoes. My oldest daughter, who is 17 and attending junior college, suffers from clinical depression, has vision problems which make it impossible for her to change focus from near to far (like from desk to blackboard and back), and is dysgraphic (doesn't have the fine motor coordination to write). She also is prone to panic attacks under stress.

This is what we did:

1. We used a graphing calculator for math which shows all the steps on a little screen so we can see what she has done. The calculator does the arithmetic but not the "thinking".
2. When she started at the junior college, we immediately contacted the Special Services Department there. Their function is to assist students with all kinds of disabilities, as they have been a tremendous help. She had to undergo the testing procedure for learning disabilities again since her age now makes her an "adult" and gather all the results of her previous testing and treatment. As a result, however, she was given NCR paper to have someone else take notes for her in classes, for tests she goes down to the special services office where she takes the test untimed and on a word processor instead of writing it out. Because she is "certified" to have these disabilities, she will also be able to take the SAT under specialized conditions.
3. We allow her to take a reduced class load and we keep a careful eye on her activity level in order to minimize the possibility of migraines or panic attacks.

My daughter is intelligent, beautiful, strong and confident. I can't help but feel that home schooling has preserved her confidence and self-esteem. We have seen God work things out in her life in ways that have shown her His love and reality. If we had it to do over again, I would have liked to have understood her problems sooner, and taken

much more of an "unschooling" approach with her than I did, but I would like to encourage you that your son's potential can be unlocked, that there is plenty of help out there.

If you would like to e-mail me, please feel free.



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-  [14-year-old Writer](#), cafi, 18:12:27, 9/20/97

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**Subject:**

**Name:** Cherilu

**Time/Date:** 16:27:48 9/20/97

**Message:**

Cafi,

Do you have any suggestions regarding a 14 yr. old who loves to read, draw, and write stories, but has weak grammar skills? She has recently been acting secretary for her 4-H club and she has surprised me with her handling of that job. I'd like to encourage her writing and drawing strengths but she resists "pushing" on my part. She's always been homeschooled.

Cheri



**Subject:** 14-year-old Writer

**Name:** cafi

**Time/Date:** 18:12:27 9/20/97

**Message:**

Hi Cheri -- Boy, can I relate. I also had a 14-year-old daughter who loved to read, write, and draw and who also had weak grammar skills. Tamara also was secretary of her 4-H -- guess they have a lot in common.

We never did attack the grammar skills head-on (e.g. with exercises, tests, and texts). Instead, Tamara simply read a LOT of good writing. And when she did write something, anything, if it was important (e.g. a 4-H Project Record book), we corrected the grammar together. What's REALLY ironic is that Tamara, now 20 and in college, often has her classmates ask her to edit their writing before they turn something in. I was talking to her last night on the phone and she was saying things

like, "Mom, can you believe there are college students who don't know the difference between 'their' and 'there'?" She was also astounded that most of her classmates seem to be unable to rearrange wording to make sentences and paragraphs more understandable. I think that skill comes as much from lots of reading as from grammar exercises.

Encourage your daughter's creativity by appreciating her work. After all, as any book editor will tell you, it is the creativity that valued -- usage is just mechanics which ANY good editor can fix. Encourage your daughter to develop good usage/grammar habits by questioning sentences and paragraphs that don't make sense BECAUSE of poor grammar. In other words, work on the grammar IN CONTEXT. An excellent resource for helping you teach her to evaluate and edit her own work is the book *In The Middle: Writing, Reading, and Learning with Adolescents*. Book should be available in any middle to large size library system as it has been out for several years.

I've also noted -- and I think somebody else mentioned this in another thread here -- that some kids find it useful to read their pieces aloud. Glaring grammar errors jump out at them when they slow down enough to read something aloud. You might want to try it.

If you do decide to try a grammar program, my favorite -- as well as one of the least painful and most self-instructional -- is Wanda Phillips' *Easy Grammar*. Do it once, do it right, and you will probably not have to cover it again.

Cafi in CA



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## Subject of this thread: "Writing & Drawing"

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**Subject:** Writing & Drawing

**Name:** Cherilu

**Time/Date:** 16:29:10 9/20/97

**Message:**

Cafi,

Do you have any suggestions regarding a 14 yr. old who loves to read, draw, and write stories, but has weak grammar skills? She has recently been acting secretary for her 4-H club and she has surprised me with her handling of that job. I'd like to encourage her writing and drawing strengths but she resists "pushing" on my part. She's always been homeschooled. Any outside the house ideas?

Cheri



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**Subject:** low selfesteem due to the pressures of public school  
**Name:** ruth  
**Time/Date:** 16:31:33 9/20/97  
**Message:**

Please help...I have just recently pulled my 15 year old daughter out of her public school has she has been hurt many times by her so called classfriends. Her selfteem and confidence in herself has just been totally shattered. Because of our decision to homeschool her instead using our states correspondance material a state psycologist has become involved and wants to interview us on Tuesday. Their argument is that by pulling her out completely instead of putting her into perhaps a different school she is 'running away from her problem' and will get into some sort of complacency and never want to go to, maybe college etc..where there is other people again. My daughter is a high acheiver accemically and has great plans with her life through her own motivation. I am definelty keeping her at home to do her schooling (something which is not very common at her age in our country of New Zealand) but I have to convince this psycologist that this is the best thing for our daughter. Any comments, advice or helpful suggestions as to what to say would be most appreciated.




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**Subject:** Beginning Hmscing With 15-ye...  
**Name:** cafi  
**Time/Date:** 18:29:05 9/20/97  
**Message:**

Ruth --

Congratulations on your decision to homeschool. I know that neither

you nor your daughter will regret this. Frankly, I think it shows great intelligence as well as independence of spirit for you and your daughter to consider this at this stage of the game. Of course, you can't tell the psychologist that. Here are a few tidbits you might want to throw his way though:

(1) Depending on which study you read, homeschoolers average 15-30 percentile points higher on standardized tests than their cohorts who attend school. Why is it so crazy for your daughter to want to be part of this group of superior achievers, especially with her goals?

(2) Studies of socialization of homeschoolers shows that they rank higher on measures of "getting along with their age peers" than kids who attend school. They also rank higher on scales of adaptability, cooperation, etc. Again, why wouldn't your daughter want to be part of this group?

(3) Most homeschooled teenagers complete their secondary studies ahead of schedule. If your daughter is already certain of her post-secondary plans, why shouldn't she get on with it?

(4) Homeschooling promotes autonomy, creativity, and independent thought, characteristics most colleges and businesses are looking for. Why should your daughter attend schools which largely promote just the opposite -- conformity, lockstep learning, and running with the herd?

(5) Homeschooling, because it is SO efficient (our teenagers never spent more than 2 hours daily on formal academics), allows LOTS of time for community involvement and even apprenticeship and internship training. I can't think of a better way to preview possible careers.

(6) Home Education promotes family closeness. While I know it is not politically correct for teenagers to be close to their families -- our kids (and we) found it wonderfully reassuring.

(7) Homeschooling permits flexibility -- take advantage of the ability to drop everything for travel, family problems, etc.

(8) Homeschoolers are readily admitted to college; colleges recruit homeschoolers and in some cases offer them special scholarships.

Cafi in CA



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**Subject:** self esteem

**Name:** Lisa

**Time/Date:** 17:44:57 9/20/97

**Message:**

Try calmly explaining about her self-esteem and confidence. Explain how motivated she is and that the social structure at school is keeping her too upset to meet her goals. In other words, use their language against them. If they are psychologists, have healthy reasons to pull her out. Be firm, but concerned about her psyche and inner self and peer group.

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## Subject of this thread: "High school actor"

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**Subject:** High school actor  
**Name:** BJ  
**Time/Date:** 18:17:53 9/20/97  
**Message:**

My son's main passion in life is his acting.  
 He is a 17 yr old junior this year and has been homeschooled since we pulled him out of ps after about 9 weeks of 9th grade.

My question is how concerned should I be about an excess in number of credits on his high school transcript. Since we were not sure when we took him out of school whether he would go back, he wanted to be sure to cover as many credits as his ps friends. They could have 8 credits and our umbrella school required Bible as a course in addition to other courses in 9th grade. As a result he has 17 credits already. Nine from his freshman year and eight last year. However, many of these are elective classes. We still have several state required classes and will probably end up with around 30 high school credits instead of 22.

He is not interested in graduating early or taking any college classes at this time.

He just wants as much time with flexible hours to fit theatre into as he can get.

He will probably be interested in college but only




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**Subject:** Credits  
**Name:** cafi  
**Time/Date:** 18:35:39 9/20/97  
**Message:**

Hi BJ --

I think we ended up with 30 some odd credits on both of our kids' home-brew high school transcripts. Like you, we easily could have ended up with 50 or 60, since we had documented 10-12 hours per day, sometimes a LOT of it in a single area, like your son.

When we put the transcripts together, we just made decisions about what was really important and what we could leave out. With your average high school granting 20-26 credits, I thought much more than 35 credits looked a little silly, even though we could document it. We just picked what we thought would most appeal to admissions officers and let the rest go.

Cafi in CA



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  -  [Need more info Cafj](#), JLF, 19:49:00, 9/21/97

**Subject:** college credit in highschool  
**Name:** JLF  
**Time/Date:** 22:21:10 9/20/97  
**Message:**

Hi Cafj, I just found out you were doing this forum and I was thrilled. You have been on my mind alot as I visit your site and pout over my friend losing my copy of your book. Oh well, I have another one on order.

Anyway, my son is thinking he may want some type of military experience (like the Airforce) to help with the expenses of his desire for flying planes and copters. Will the diploma from Clonlara get him into the armed forces if he decides to go that route? Should he be working on earning college credits at home while doing high school? Would that help his position in the military? Does Karl's site discuss how to do college at home and/or do you have suggestions for earning college credit at home simultaneously with doing the high school work? Is Calvert and Cambridge too structured for Lifestyle of Learning types like myself? Am I totally confusing you by asking way over the limit of questions in one post? Thanks for all your help!!! You are a gem! Janet Farmer from FL!!!! :-)



**Subject:** College Credit In High Schoo...  
**Name:** cafi  
**Time/Date:** 13:29:47 9/21/97  
**Message:**

Hi Janet --

Are you asking about enlisting in the military versus applying to one of the service academies? I am going to assume that are -- that your son is looking at enlisting in the Air Force or Navy or even Army after he completes high school.

The Air Force, just recently I believe, has created a separate category of available slots for enlisting homeschoolers. Since the number of slots far exceeds the number of homeschoolers right now, I don't think your son's homeschooling status will be any bar to them considering him. Of course, if your son obtains an external diploma, say from Clonlara, he also has available to him the slots reserved for those with high school diplomas. And if you don't want to get involved in the paperwork described in my book, that may be a good way to go, especially if you have had luck with your lifestyle of learning approach.

If your son wants to fly eventually, the more math and science he can get right now, the better. If that means college classes because he is exceeding your level of expertise, go for it. But I don't think you need to worry about college credits now, unless he is aiming for one of the military service academies.

In any case, if your son wants to head in this general direction, I think he would REALLY like Civil Air Patrol Cadet Program. It's available to kids 12 and up and includes training in aerospace & aviation, military customs and courtesies, leadership, physical education, and much more. My son got free flying lessons through CAP and had his pilot's license at age 17. There's a link to CAP from my WEB page.

Cafi in CA



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**Subject:** Civil Air Patrol Cadet Prog...

**Name:** mgaines

**Time/Date:** 16:23:25 9/21/97

**Message:**

Hi Cafi

My son is now 14 and is in the 9th grade. He is interested in working for NASA some day. We are trying to teach him as much science and math as possible. He is also gifted in computers like his father. What more would you suggest that we do to help him on his way?

I just came from your web page but was unable to find the link for Civil Air Patrol Cadet Program. Any chance you would post the URL here?

Thanks,

Melody



---

**Subject:** CAP  
**Name:** cafi  
**Time/Date:** 22:46:24 9/21/97  
**Message:**

Hi Melody --

The CAP link from my WEB page is on the page you will get to if you click on Meet The Author or Cafi Cohen in the first sentence.

You can also call a local AF recruiter or nearby AF base and ask for the number of the nearest CAP Cadet Squadron.

Good luck,

Cafi in CA



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**Subject:** Need more info Cafi  
**Name:** JLF  
**Time/Date:** 19:49:00 9/21/97  
**Message:**

I'm not sure if my son is thinking about going straight into the service, or going to the academies. How can he better his chances for getting into the academies, and how is that better than going straight into the service? I'm not sure if he wants to commit to 10 years of school/service right off the bat. Any suggestions would be appreciated. I am investigating CAP but so far have not had a response from the local folks. We did order an info package from the main CAP I guess. Thanks again! Janet ps Is the Clonlara a good enough diploma to get him in the military schools?



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## Subject of this thread: "Cafi, I hear all...but..."

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**Subject:** Cafi, I hear all...but....

**Name:** sharon

**Time/Date:** 23:01:50 9/20/97

**Message:**

Cafi,

I hope I can join in the group here. I have twin sons, age 11, 5th grade. I have been reading all the posts. I hear what you say about relaxed learning styles (my sons have been homeschooled since the beginning), however, a part of me is so panicked about their lack of grammar skills....I have one who is a good reader and speller. The other struggles with spelling and grammar....I have learned that he is an oral speller so I have had to combine saying the word, my writing it, having him saying the word and then writing it. I also quiz him orally and he does so much better. So, I combine the oral with the tactile.....

I guess I want you to reassure me that if I lay aside "formal" spelling and grammar for now and allow them to do just journal writing, perhaps starting off with them dictating to me first, then they pick up and write latter....that all will fall into place. I guess I need to know that by the time 6th grade rolls around, they won't be so far behind because I went this different route. I do see the logic in encouraging more reading and journal writing to improve these skills. So, do I just lay a side the 5th grade spellers for now? (BTW, one son still spells was: wuz..sometimes..

They are the greatest kids a mom could ask for and their minds are like sponges. I know I need to feel less attached to "traditional" text books. Also, I guess I am scared that if I divert from the traditional, that when test time (ps required 6th grade) comes around they won't know alot of the spelling words.....Am I worrying for nothing? (I also know not to place alot of emphasis on those tests...because I do know before they

ever take them, what they do and don't know.)

Thanks for being here to help...  
Sharon



---

**Subject:** Spelling & Grammar Panic...  
**Name:** cafi  
**Time/Date:** 13:39:44 9/21/97  
**Message:**

Hi Sharon --

I KNOW this sounds counter-intuitive (and of course, I can make no promises) but -- if you just go with the reading and journaling and writing for real world purposes for a year) they might actually do BETTER on the 6th grade test than if you use traditional materials. After all, you have been using traditional materials all along, and still one son thinks "wuz" looks all right.

Don't worry about them "not knowing the words on the sixth grade test". If you were using different materials, there would be DIFFERENT words on the 6th grade test, there being NO STANDARD SET OF SIXTH GRADE WORDS.

You could adopt the middle path of continuing with spelling lessons (3-5 words per week), but concentrating on words they misspell in their own writing. After all, what does it serve to memorize and probably forget the spelling of "evidence" only to continue misspelling "was"?

Same thing with grammar. Some kids learn best with exercises. Many others do BETTER with correcting grammar in their own writing. Journaling and reading is not doing less -- for many kids it's doing much more and will yield much better results. I have talked to MANY school teachers who agree with this. The principal reason they do not implement it is that it takes too much time. With two kids, you probably don't have that problem.

Cafi in CA



---

**Subject:** I feel better...  
**Name:** SharonM  
**Time/Date:** 16:34:45 9/21/97  
**Message:**

Thanks for your reassurance. I know you are right but it can be hard to go against the grain. You mentioned in an earlier post: Wanda Phillip's

Easy Grammar....What is the age/grade level for this and where can I get it?

Thanks again!  
Sharon



**Subject:** Easy Grammar  
**Name:** cafi  
**Time/Date:** 22:21:04 9/21/97  
**Message:**

Hi Sharon --

Wanda Phillips' Easy Grammar is for various grade levels 2-adult.  
Most large homeschooling suppliers stock it. Try The Elijah Company.

Cafi in CA



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## Subject of this thread: "Preparing for the Future"

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**Subject:** Preparing for the Future

**Name:** Rebecca

**Time/Date:** 09:28:28 9/21/97

**Message:**

As we begin Jr. & Sr. High, what would you suggest that we do? I want my children to be prepared for the college entrance exams and to "look good" to the colleges.

We live in AR, so we don't have to keep any records. Should we be keeping some sort of records?



---

**Subject:** Records & Preparation fo...

**Name:** cafi

**Time/Date:** 13:43:33 9/21/97

**Message:**

Hi Rebecca -- Yes, you definitely should be keeping some records, but the record-keeping need not be laborious. In fact, beginning in grades 6 or 7, your kids can do most of the work (should take them about 5 minutes each morning), with you collating their data about once every three months.

The system I like is described in detail in my book, "And What About College?" How Homeschooling Leads To Admissions To The Best Colleges and Universities. You can read the first chapter of the book on-line at my web site:

<http://pages.prodigy.com/homeschool>

Why do you need to begin to worry about these types of records at ages 11 or 12? Because SOME of the things your kids do NOW will make it to their high school transcripts and portfolios. Also because, like most homeschoolers, they will probably graduate early -- at age 16

or 17.

Cafi in CA



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**Subject of this thread: "called to work with kids"**

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**Subject:** called to work with kids  
**Name:** lorna mitchell  
**Time/Date:** 16:52:40 9/21/97  
**Message:**

Cafi, I have a 15 yr. old son who loves to work with kids. He's a natural! He coaches soccer, teaches Sunday school, and even spent the summer out of state working as a counselor at Camp Dry Gulch in OK. My question is this: He is a sophomore and is taking pretty standard classes right now. What direction should we (he and I) head his studies for the last 2 years of high school in order to give him the best edge to possibly work with children as a career?



---

**Subject:** Working With Kids  
**Name:** cafi  
**Time/Date:** 22:24:40 9/21/97  
**Message:**

Hi Lorna --

Your son sounds terrific. I think the best background he can have is what you are already doing -- lots of hands-on experience and a great education. The only specific thing that I can think of that might be helpful, especially now, is a college level independent-study course in Developmental Psychology. Check Peterson's The Independent Study Catalog (most libraries should have this). Helpful reading would be In The Own Way and other books by Thomas Armstrong.

Cafi in CA



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## Subject of this thread: "College Fair& Thanks"

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- .....

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**Subject:** College Fair& Thanks

**Name:** Sarah Acker

**Time/Date:** 16:59:43 9/21/97

**Message:**

Cafi, my boys and I visited a college fair this week, sponsored by a group of private schools in the Jackson, MS area. Some 60 institutions were represented, and we went as a test flight, more or less, for all of us. Part of the time we were together, and part of the time we went separately. Now, my nearly-13-year-old son wasn't talking to reps as much as he was collecting free pencils and chewing gum ;-), but my 15-year-old talked to quite a few.

I talked to a lot of real reps and quite a few fake ones (alumni, recruited for the occasion), and was amazed at the number who just had no idea about their institution's stance on homeschooled students. I pushed the testing-out of core courses, getting AP and CLEP credit, and a couple more things--and was dumbfounded by those who insisted that a GED was required. I tried to stay tactful, but forceful, and say that my standards for high school graduation were just as high, if not higher, than some two-bit public school out in the Delta (excuse the local allusion, folks), and that the rep needed to take the message back to his superiors that the homeschooling market is *\*real\**, large, and we have academically capable, high-achieving, self-confident students who can blow the tops off of the standardized tests.

I just wanted to thank you for at least having half an idea of what to ask the reps. Now, to get the other half, I guess I'd better go buy your book, eh? I realized after I got home that I hadn't paid much attention to location, student body composition or size, or major fields of study. Guess I got a little rabid on the homeschooling acceptance issue...(grin)

Anyway, and on to the second part:

Thanks, Cafi, for your time, your help, for sharing your expertise, and your genuine compassion. I'm so glad you've spent these four days with us, and I'm sure many will join me in expressing appreciation!

Sarah



**Subject:** College Fair

**Name:** cafi

**Time/Date:** 22:30:28 9/21/97

**Message:**

Thanks for your nice note.

The results of your visit to the college fair don't surprise me. When my book was written -- over a year ago -- probably less than 5% of colleges had written policies relating to homeschoolers. That number is increasing -- my guess is that currently between 15 and 30% of schools have written policies. Of course that still leaves us with 70 to 85% of colleges and universities with NO policy. Unfortunately, at college fairs you often also end up talking to underlings or alumni -- people who often don't reflect the institution's policies simply because they don't KNOW them.

The BEST way to get a GOOD answer from any school on their policies is the query them IN WRITING. That will generate a written response, which, because it is in writing, is more likely to reflect the school's real policy.

Cafi in CA



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## Subject of this thread: "Gateway Christian School"

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-  [Gateway Christian School](#), cafi, 22:42:32, 9/21/97

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**Subject:** Gateway Christian School  
**Name:** janet  
**Time/Date:** 17:57:10 9/21/97  
**Message:**

Cafi:

What do you know about the Gateway Christian School? Will the diploma really mean anything in the end? Also is it deprimental to get a GED? I know it used to be considered "bad", people would consider you a dropout or something. Has this changed at all? Thanks, Janet



---

**Subject:** Gateway Christian School  
**Name:** cafi  
**Time/Date:** 22:42:32 9/21/97  
**Message:**

Hi Janet --

I'm sorry, I have no in-depth info on Gateway Christian School.

On the GED, yes, there are some people who think is carries a negative connotation. Frankly, the only time a homeschooler HAS to take it is for admissions to certain colleges (not all, just a few). And THOSE students will presumably have a college degree eventually, which makes GED-or-diploma a moot point. Homeschool parents can't grant ALL homeschooled students a home-brew diploma. Then the kid can always answer 'yes' to the question, "Do you have a high school diploma?"

Cafi in CA



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-  [Testing](#), kate theriot, 08:39:40, 9/22/97
-  [Spelling](#), cafi, 22:44:01, 9/21/97

**Subject:** Journaling and spelling rules...

**Name:** SharonM

**Time/Date:** 19:01:34 9/21/97

**Message:**

Cafi,

I have another question. If I have my kids write in journals to develop spelling and writing skills, how do I incorporate spelling rules. The text we use teaches rules with each spelling list. Do I need to even worry about it or, do I use a resource text?

Thanks again!!



**Subject:** Testing

**Name:** kate theriot

**Time/Date:** 08:39:40 9/22/97

**Message:**

Testing for archive



**Subject:** Spelling

**Name:** cafi

**Time/Date:** 22:44:01 9/21/97

**Message:**

Sharon -- You answered your own question. Use the text as a resource, much like you would use a dictionary.

Cafi in CA



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## Subject of this thread: "Questions for Cafi--long!"

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  -  [Thank you, Cafi!](#), Jean, 08:11:43, 9/22/97
- .....

---

**Subject:** Questions for Cafi--long!

**Name:** Jean

**Time/Date:** 20:31:19 9/21/97

**Message:**

Cafi, thanks so much for all your time and help. I have learned so much reading the questions and your answers. Now I really must buy your book, right? :-)

But I do have a couple questions. I have an incredibly sweet, cooperative, intelligent, but very introverted 13 yr old who is on her 2nd year hs (her request) in whom I have seen incredible growth scolastically, socially and even improved health since she has had time away from the social strains of school. I've wanted to keep her home longer as she is so happy and doing so well here. However, I have been concerned that she'd get too isolated so I was delighted to see that you suggest community service. She will begin volunteering at our local (wonderful) library soon and hopes someday to turn this into a career. Thank you. Somehow that had never entered my mind, before.

Question One: She has had a very hard time with writing. This is probably partly because she was very ill and had a stroke as a toddler and lost a lot of her vocabulary so had lots of catch-up to do and still has trouble finding the word she wants. Well, I have her writing in a daily journal (one column of a steno pad) as well as 13 min of "jam writing" which is steady writing about whatever comes into your head without worrying about spelling or penmanship. This seems to be helping her "block" but where do I go from here? I had her do Wordsmith Apprentice last year and she struggled and hated it but did it. Right now she is writing a "book" about our recent trip to Plimoth Plantation which was the culmination of our study of the Pilgrims. She

is only able to write a couple pages a day, though (and that is alternating lines). Suggestions please.

Also, she has had trouble in math due to her difficulty with numbers and inability to memorize times tables. In fact, she still mixes up the numbers 11 and 12! She worked through Saxon 76 last year using a little laminated card with times table grid. She is now doing Saxon 87 but as you've said it is probably redundant, I now have her doing a couple lessons a day with the practice problems only and only doing the problem set once a week or so until she runs into something new. My question is this: Could you suggest a good consumer math book for the rest of this year that would have checkbook balancing, budgets, etc. or should she go ahead into algebra I and just use the calculator?

She loves to read and would happily spend most of her day with a book and as it is manages to read a least a book a day in spite of the school work assignments I give her and her afternoon paper route.

I'd love to say to her "OK, do this math and this writing and here's a pile of books about lots of interesting things." But is that enough for a 7th grader. Yep, I'm scared to leave the structure behind. She's worked too hard to catch up!

Help, please--and thanks for your patience slogging through all this. I've tried this whole weekend to think how to say it more succinctly and finally gave up and rambled...

Jean



---

**Subject:** Ideal Program

**Name:** cafi

**Time/Date:** 23:30:23 9/21/97

**Message:**

Jean -- You write that you would love to say, "OK, do this math and this writing, and here's a pile of books about lots of interesting things." Basically you have just described a VERY popular program on the market, The Robinson Curriculum. The author had his kids do math 1-2 hours daily (Saxon), 1 hour of writing, and 2-3 hours of reading (Great Books type titles) and ended up with some VERY accomplished kids when all was said and done. You may not be too far off the mark for your daughter. Maybe you should try it for a year. In fact, if you had tried it previously, your daughter may be even further ahead than she is now!

Cafi in CA



**Subject:** Math

**Name:** cafi

**Time/Date:** 23:09:55 9/21/97

**Message:**

Hi Jean --

If she were mine, I would have her go ahead and do Algebra I with a calculator. Concurrently, I would do math games, hands-on math, consumer math, and math unit studies. Look at the book Family Math for math games, Janice Van Cleave's book Math for Every Kid for hands-on math, materials from Wiley publishers or Alpha Omega or Steck-Vaughn for consumer math). Alternate the algebra with the supplemental math other every other day or week or month -- article on this at my WEB site:

<http://pages.prodigy.com/homeschool>

I would also CONTINUE to work on her times tables with a game called Math War: This is played like regular War (you know, that simple card game kids learn when they are very young). Deal the whole deck (minus face cards) so that both players end up with 20 cards. Then, both players turn up TWO cards, rather than one, and each player says the product of the two cards. In other words, if I turn up 3 and 5, I say 15; if you turn up 4 and 8, you say 32. High product takes all four cards. Ties are broken just like the regular game (three down, one up, high card takes all). Object of the game, just like regular War, is to eventually end up with all the cards. For somebody who is having a lot of trouble with times tables, you just put the lower cards in the deck (perhaps using two decks, so that you have enough cards). This same game works well also as an addition War.

Cafi in CA



---

**Subject:** 7th grader

**Name:** cafi

**Time/Date:** 22:51:37 9/21/97

**Message:**

Hi Jean --

I'll attack one question per note. Regarding helping your daughter with her writing, I think you are heading in the right direction with the journal and writing about the trip to Plimouth Plantation. With her, I would use the many excellent suggestions that Nancie Atwell makes in her book: In The Middle: Writing, Reading and Learning with Adolescents to edit the Plimouth piece. After that, I would use Atwell's suggestions to help BOTH of you brainstorm for her NEXT piece and then apply the revising and editing suggestions to THAT. I know this sounds vague, but the depth of breadth of Atwell's suggestions are

impossible to even outline here! Get the book -- it's worth every penny  
-- alternatively, most libraries have it.

Cafi in CA



---

**Subject:** Thank you, Cafi!

**Name:** Jean

**Time/Date:** 08:11:43 9/22/97

**Message:**

Thank you so much for all the time you have put into advising us all.  
Bless you!



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## Subject of this thread: "Am I overdoing this?"

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-  [Balance](#), cafi, 11:20:02, 9/19/97
-  [Thanks for the encouragement.....](#), ShannonG, 15:02:33, 9/19/97

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**Subject:** Am I overdoing this?  
**Name:** ShannonG  
**Time/Date:** 11:52:56 9/18/97  
**Message:**

For my daughters HS Science and Language Arts curriculum, we are doing independent research projects, each requiring a minimum of 10 hours work, for a total of 100 hours. After less than a month of school, I am discovering that each project requires much more time than I had estimated, and, as a result, daughter is working sun-up to sun-down. I want to keep things in balance; we expect her to be at the very least competitive with PS students in ability, but I want her not to feel overwhelmed. She is enjoying the work and is a perfectionist (big time!) which may be contributing to the problem; she wants everything to be as thorough as possible. How do we keep things in balance here?




---

**Subject:** Balance  
**Name:** cafi  
**Time/Date:** 12:25:09 9/18/97  
**Message:**

Hi Shannon --

VERY interesting question. I am curious about these projects. Could you describe one science and one language arts project so I could do some sort of comparison with what is done in school (your criterion, not mine !). I did teach high school biology and chemistry plus college level science and math, so I feel I have some basis of comparison.

My initial guess for an answer to your dilemma (without hearing the details I have asked for above) is that you could reduce the number of projects. ANY college admissions officer is going to be impressed by DEPTH. Breadth is also important, but won't sell a student like delving into all the details of a subject. Also, most college admissions officers realize that DEPTH leads to BREADTH -- so I wouldn't worry about reducing the number of projects.

Another thought. If your daughter is thoroughly enjoying this -- if this is something she does even on Saturday, when you probably don't insist on schoolwork -- if that's the case, well, then, let her go for it. On the other hand, if she would like some sort of change, post the details of a couple of your units and perhaps I can make some suggestions.

Cafi in CA



**Subject:** OK, here are a couple of des...  
**Name:** ShannonG  
**Time/Date:** 22:45:43 9/18/97  
**Message:**

....for Language Arts she has chosen to earn 1/2 credit in English Literature. I have listed 25 or so English authors, from different time periods, and also listed recommended works by each author (although she can choose others with my approval). She has to read 10 works, coming from as much variety in chronology and style as possible, and write a short (2-3 page) book report for each. In biology, one project is to color and label the pages of the Zoology Coloring Book dealing with frogs; another project is to plant seeds in different types of soils and monitor them for growth; another is to observe a pre-school child, preferably under the age of 2, for 3 months and chart his/her development. She is currently working on the "frog innards" (as she calls them), and the child development chart. In Lang. Arts, reading is no problem; in fact, I have to threaten to take books away from her to get her to do something else! She does seem to enjoy learning more with this format than she ever did with just textbooks...I only hope she doesn't burn out too soon.



**Subject:** Balance  
**Name:** cafi  
**Time/Date:** 11:20:02 9/19/97  
**Message:**

Shannon --

Neat, neat stuff. You could publish a set of high school unit studies. They sound like things even I would be interested in pursuing!

Anyway, although you didn't come right out and say so, it sounds like she is very much enjoying the format (you said she reads at all hours of the day and night). I would have a few casual conversations with her, let her know that if she just wants to work on this stuff 4-6 hours daily that it is more than enough. Or that if she wants to take a day (or a week off) to catch her breath that it's fine. Somehow, it would be nice to work in some flexibility so that you BOTH can make adjustments as things proceed.

Why don't you just schedule a recap and review and planning session the end of each month and discuss needed adjustments at that time? We did this every 3-6 months with our kids (see my article: Putting Together An Eclectic Curriculum at my WEB site: <http://pages.prodigy.com/homeschool>)

Cafi in CA

Keep good records; she's going to have a dynamite transcript.



---

**Subject:** Thanks for the encouragement...

**Name:** ShannonG

**Time/Date:** 15:02:33 9/19/97

**Message:**

I particularly like the idea of a monthly check; this could be very good for us. Thanks for the suggestions!



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## Subject of this thread: "Grade Level?"

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  -  [Thanks!](#), Laura Goad, 22:07:42, 9/18/97
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**Subject:** Grade Level?  
**Name:** Laura Goad  
**Time/Date:** 12:35:41 9/18/97  
**Message:**

Cafi,

Last spring I started working with a girl from our church who was flunking out of public school. She was supposedly in the 10th grade. Grade level seems to be important to her and her family. I have worked with her and feel that she does not know some things that a 9th grader should know. She went to 2 christian schools and was expelled, and 3 public schools and was asked to not come back. She has a desire to go to college, but while in school she loved to "socialize" and when she didn't understand something that a teacher said, she asked questions and I guess she asked a lot and was considered a trouble maker. Am I rambling here? Anyway, how important at this time is grade level? Should I prepare her for taking the GED? I am now working with her using KONOS-History of the World. She is doing well, and her parents have been surprised at what she is learning. She is a very talented writer. She is learning how to use reference guides in her writing. She is now staying in our home because of some problems in her own home. We are staying in contact with her parents, and things have been a roller coaster here. I'm not used to working with a 16 year old (my oldest is 12) and all in all, I think that we have been doing fairly well considering all that is happening.

I have planned our year using History of the World for my younger children also. Any suggestions I can have that will help this girl work with my four children (7-12) would be great!

Thanks Cafi, for all your ideas and suggestions.

Laura



---

**Subject:** Grade Level

**Name:** cafi

**Time/Date:** 12:52:52 9/18/97

**Message:**

Hi Laura --

From what you have told me, it sounds like this young lady is blossoming academically with the individual attention you are giving her. I suspect that her demands for similar attention in a school environment were more than the system -- such as it is -- could sustain. That, of course, got her labeled a trouble-maker.

I am not clear from your note if she is still attending school at all (I thought not, but wasn't entirely sure). If she is home with you full-time, you need to:

- (1) lead her towards more self-instruction (especially with your four other children), and
- (2) you need to help her find outlets in the community (volunteer work, paying jobs, activities), and
- (3) keep doing some of what you are doing with her since it is working.

I have suggestions to address these areas on my WEB page, link below. Just click on the Articles hypertext on my main page and then check out the articles on Self-Directed Learning and Volunteering.

Grade level? A necessary construct for schools -- but pretty much inapplicable in the homeschooling environment. Work with her where SHE is -- not where some educrat said she should be (which the educational establishment cannot agree upon anyway).

Cafi in CA



**Subject:** Thanks!

**Name:** Laura Goad

**Time/Date:** 22:07:42 9/18/97

**Message:**

Cafi,

Thanks for your input. Kayli is at my home full time, and adjusting well. She does have a part-time job, and is enjoying it. Right now I am trying to work out some times that she can help out in our childrens' area at church.

She did a project with my four today that turned out pretty well. I'll back off from the "grade level" and just focus on her learning. Konos History of the World is more self learning style, which has been good for her.

Thanks again,

Laura



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## Subject of this thread: "Finish H/S early, What?"

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**Subject:** Finish H/S early, What?

**Name:** lori

**Time/Date:** 23:56:28 9/18/97

**Message:**

I am teaching my 7th grade daughter. Let's say she's "academically challenged" or a reluctant learner. We'll be lucky if we can finish 7th grade. I feel in p/s she recieved more "projects" etc. to do. Because she's reluctant, I tend to lighten the load a little, but try to still keep her up to where she needs to be. How do we know where they really should be? And when do you know they've covered everything? When they've done every page of every text book through 12th grade?

Homeschoolers tend to stress quantity (every page of every text book) when we KNOW public schools don't cover that much. What are we to do? This is my 2nd year, and I'm still trying to find the right balance. And should we have "school" be like public school classroom? I spend a lot of time on discussion, but then feel I've got to finish all our daily work also . . . . balance again, right?

Lori



**Subject:** Balance????

**Name:** cafi

**Time/Date:** 11:35:18 9/19/97

**Message:**

Hi Lori --

You say "homeschoolers tend to stress quantity (every page of every textbook)." REALLY??? Not many of the homeschoolers I know do that. Many that I know (including myself) use few or no textbooks. I have known homeschooling parents who have "school" like a public school classroom, but we would have found that stifling in our home.

My two kids spent one to two hours each day on essentials (my daughter, like yours, was also reluctant with respect to traditional academics). The remainder of the day they devoted to projects and activities that THEY chose. Reluctant students turn into learning dynamos when THEIR interests direct the learning. Check out my WEB page articles on Self Directed Learning and Putting Together An Eclectic Curriculum for more discussion on this (<http://pages.prodigy.com/homeschool>).

It sounds like you are doing school-at-home (one approach to home education). Be aware that homeschoolers succeed with MANY different approaches, including school-at-home, unit studies, interest-initiated learning, and the eclectic approach (which combines all of the above). There is no One Right Way to homeschool. You don't have "finish all the daily work" to succeed.

Where you may want to re-evaluate your situation is with respect to traditional academics. You may want to keep the math text, but turn to self-selected reading and journaling for language arts, videos/documentaries/discussion for history and social studies, and hands-on projects for science (Castle Heights Press has NEAT cookbook science curriculum). Schoolish approaches do NOT work for 80% of our population (my guesstimate based on the number of adults who never read for pleasure and need cash register picture keys to make change). Why bring those approaches into your home?

Cafi in CA



**Subject:** help me keep 7yo home...

**Name:** michel

**Time/Date:** 17:53:26 9/21/97

**Message:**

I have an interesting but challenging situation now. I have homeschooled as a "stay at home homemaker" for many years. My 2 oldest went ahead into p.s. in the 8th grade. So now I only have one son, 2nd gd., and he really wants to continue homeschooling. My curriculum usually involves ALOT of me "teaching" it and supervising his work, etc. NOW the challenge: I have to begin making a serious

income. I am staying at home and am able to begin my job using my computer---but it must be done from 9 until 5! With 3 sons in various activities, truthfully I am too exhausted to teach in the evenings. (You know we are the maid, cook, laundrywoman, chauffer, etc!) What can I do to insure he gets enough learning without putting him in a public school?



---

**Subject:** 2nd grader

**Name:** cafi

**Time/Date:** 22:37:20 9/21/97

**Message:**

Michel --

Most second graders need supervision whether you are using traditional materials or completely unschooling. I suggest that you:

- (1) Carefully research and shop for materials so that you get things that are as self-instructional as possible; and
- (2) Invest in some hands-on materials -- Legos, art supplies, good records and tapes, anything hands-on that your kid likes!
- (3) Consider scheduling your and his day so that you can do an hour before your work-day starts, make readjustments/corrections/assignments during your morning break, and finish up during your lunch hour.

Cafi in CA



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**Subject:** Castle Heights Press

**Name:** sheri

**Time/Date:** 09:58:39 9/20/97

**Message:**

Dear Cafi,

Is this cookbook for teenagers? My son loves to "putter around" (makes a terrible mess, though) and this book sounds like something he would like. Can you tell me where/how I can find it?

Also your discussions have been enlightening. I have one son who likes to "do traditional school" and one who doesn't. 15 yo is voln at local hospital, wants to be an MD. Other medical service project ideas would be helpful. Thanks for the input!



---

**Subject:** Castle Heights Press/Medical...

**Name:** cafi

**Time/Date:** 13:25:50 9/20/97

**Message:**

Hi Sheri --

Castle Heights Press has an 800 phone number, so I would suggest calling 800 information. Get their literature and talk to the owner about the age appropriateness of the cookbook chemistry.

Other medical service projects for your future MD? If you have a university nearby, inquire with the chemistry and biology departments and see if any of the research labs need volunteer help. Also volunteering or setting up an internship with a veterinary clinic, zoo, or science museum could be very helpful. Also, he might want to thing about First Responder Training offered by many fire departments plus CPR and First Aid training through Red Cross. Lastly, consider volunteering with any one of the MANY disease-specific associations: American Lung Assn, Heart Association, Diabetes, etc.

Cafi in CA



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**Subject:** Thanks

**Name:** lori

**Time/Date:** 14:37:54 9/19/97

**Message:**

Thanks for the suggestions, I will consider them.

I have homeschooled in 2 states, and in both h/s groups I've joined for support, all say to do your lesson plans by dividing the # of pages in your book, by the # of school days. Do that many pages a day. Did I join the wrong groups? I'd like to do more interesting things, it just seems like there's not a lot of time to prepare what we will study. How did you do that?

I'll visit your WEB site again, for more info.

Thanks



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**Subject:** Approaches To Home Education...

**Name:** cafi

**Time/Date:** 18:20:35 9/19/97

**Message:**

Lori -- You haven't done anything wrong. You just need to be aware that there's more than one way to succeed with home education. Yes,

there are some groups that focus entirely on traditional academics. They don't have much to offer me (I already know what traditional academics are, and I am convinced that they apply to some parts of homeschooling -- but certainly not all of it). With our own two kids, we observed almost immediately that they became lean, mean learning machines when we followed their interests -- and usually bored to tears when we didn't (Saxon Math was a happy exception).

If you go to the WEB site and read the article on Putting Together An Eclectic Curriculum, you will get an idea of how we planned and conducted ourselves. We always looked for fun, community-based ways to accomplish educational goals. Then, if we couldn't find any, we would resort to textbooks. In other words, texts and worksheets were the LAST resort.

Many people plan in just the opposite way -- they make an academic schedule (often in the manner you have described) and then fill in with "extracurriculars" if there is any time left. We began with the extras, with the fun stuff -- figured out how to call the fun stuff school -- and then filled in with any necessary academics. My kids were admitted to VERY high powered colleges and offered substantial scholarships based on all this. I know it works.

Cafi in CA



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**Subject:** "Support groups"

**Name:** Sis

**Time/Date:** 15:58:44 9/19/97

**Message:**

Our support group is mostly the "school at home" type like yours, Lori! It is a very comforting feeling to be doing what we've been raised in; our family and friends nod their sage heads at our accomplishments when we tell them all the subjects or textbooks we've waded thru! But, guess what! Less than a tenth of the materials we covered were retained to the next year!!! I am a "textbook", structured person, and it has been VERY difficult for me to get out of the school at home rut! I am convinced that it is a rut that leads nowhere tho', and I am building a ladder to get out! (No advice, just my little mumbling agreements.)



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**Subject:** Any help from public schools?

**Name:** lori

**Time/Date:** 22:53:14 9/20/97

**Message:**

Cafi,

I'm wondering if we have the right to any "help" from the public schools, such as ADD testing, speech, etc. I feel we still pay taxes, we've lightened their class loads, why shouldn't we still be entitled to some of thier services?

I assume each state is a little different, but I'm not sure where to start looking.

Thanks, Lori



**Subject:** Public School Services

**Name:** cafi

**Time/Date:** 13:48:34 9/21/97

**Message:**

Hi Lori --

Each state is VERY different. Where are you?

That said, because of Federal Law, wherever you are, you are entitled to special education services, if your child qualifies. Whether it's

helpful to become entangled in the Sp.Ed. net is debatable. I would certainly talk to those in your support group who are in a similar position before I would approach the schools.

In some states, government schools make available their instructor supply libraries and their activities and classes on a part-time basis.

Cafi in CA



---

**Subject:** ps help

**Name:** Cherie Carroll

**Time/Date:** 07:54:04 9/21/97

**Message:**

Lori, our ps will provide special needs testing and services BUT if they do then our children have to be tested and follow other requirements of the ps that they otherwise would not have to follow. I had thought about using their services but decided against it. I found a state organization that did some testing on one of my children; then found a local (hs friendly) language therapist who took time to teach me how to deal with my child's special needs. Help is out there but not always easy to find.



**Subject:** Be careful....

**Name:** sharon

**Time/Date:** 23:32:28 9/20/97

**Message:**

Lori,  
I would be cautious....in my state (GA) some changes were attempting to be made this past spring that would allow more control by the ps of homeschoolers. It all started because some homeschooling parents wanted their kids to be able to participate in the HOPE scholarship (from lottery money). They state felt that if that's what was wanted then there needed to be more control and monitoring by the ps. It could open up a whole can of worms, so to speak....It all depends on the school and their attitudes towards homeschooling....



**Subject:** It depends...

**Name:** Jean

**Time/Date:** 11:54:36 9/21/97

**Message:**

I think it really depends on your state. Here in Maine, you can basically use what services you need from the ps and otherwise they

leave you alone. Special ed is available if you need it-just ask. I will pick up the standardized achievement tests from the nearest school in a couple weeks and administer them at home, one of my kids went to the ps just for wood working--just learn, no grades, etc. Oh, the testing isn't required, that is my choice because I like knowing what area needs more work. Check with others in your state, or consider moving to Maine (smile)



**Subject:** public school

**Name:** jen

**Time/Date:** 15:39:04 9/21/97

**Message:**

Maine is like that as Jean said but it does depend on the local school, if it is hs friendly or not. The one in my town is great with us. There are those in my support group who have found special ed help from hs friendly teachers by calling the state organization and HSLDA.



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**Subject:** Writing Book  
**Name:** Susan M  
**Time/Date:** 21:48:46 9/21/97  
**Message:**

Dear Cafi,

In an earlier post, you recommended the book *In the Middle: Writing, Reading, and Learning with Adolescents* by Nanci Atwell. My library does not carry it, and I could not find it in the homeschool catalogs I checked. Can you tell me where I could get it?

Thanks!

Susan




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**Subject:** Atwell Book  
**Name:** Laura  
**Time/Date:** 09:10:07 9/22/97  
**Message:**

I also got this through interlibrary loan per Cafi's recommendation this past spring. It took a few weeks, though, since it wasn't even in our system. It was worth waiting for!

~Laura




---

**Subject:** Atwell's book

**Name:** cafi

**Time/Date:** 22:54:31 9/21/97

**Message:**

Hi Susan --

Try:

(1) Interlibrary loan (wherein your library requests the title from OUTSIDE their system); or

(2) <http://www.amazon.com> (my FAVORITE web site, where you can purchase almost any book); or

(3) Order through a local bookstore (make sure and get the less expensive paper-back!).

Cafi in CA



**Subject:** book found

**Name:** Jean

**Time/Date:** 21:54:16 9/21/97

**Message:**

I checked out a copy this afternoon. Turns out it is by a Maine author so our library had 2 copies! Try asking your library to get it for you via interlibrary loan--they ARE out there.. Good luck.



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## Subject of this thread: "Thanks for the Forum"

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**Subject:** Thanks for the Forum  
**Name:** cafi  
**Time/Date:** 23:39:25 9/21/97  
**Message:**

Thanks to all of you who participated here. If you would like to read more of my musings, check out the Articles hypertext from my WEB page:  
<http://pages.prodigy.com/homeschool>

You can also read the first chapter of my book there: "And What About College? How Homeschooling Leads To Admissions To The Best Colleges and Universities. Material in the book applies to those homeschooling ages 11 and up.

I welcome e-mail queries, but prefer to answer questions in a larger forum. You can find me at the Kaleidoscapes WEB site (<http://www.kaleidoscapes.com>), where I am a co-host or on the Prodigy homeschooling Bulletin Boards, where I have been a special contributor for 5 or 6 years. Also, my Older Kids column appears in every issue of Home Education Magazine. Back issues are on-line at <http://www.home-ed-press.com>  
The Nov-Dec, 1997 issue will have a column I have already submitted on Older Kids and writing. It lists many more resources than I have had time to recount here.

Lastly, I do workshops at statewide conferences all over the nation. Please pass along my list of workshops (at my WEB site) to your statewide conference organizers. Currently I am scheduled in 1998 for Texas, Maryland, and California.

Again, thanks for the great questions. I'll check back in briefly on Monday morning to pick up any strays!

Cafi in CA



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