

# Curriculum by Programs

## Overview

### What is A Mind in the Light?

A Mind in the Light offers a K-12 curriculum for those who wish to follow the principles of Charlotte Mason. It is currently a work in progress, since I am the sole producer for all that appears on this website and all aspects of the curriculum. I'm also a mother of two daughters, both of whom have always homeschooled. My older daughter is completing her last year at university and my younger daughter is still in high school. I'm still actively homeschooling my younger daughter and consider her education my highest priority.

There are two scopes and sequences currently in progress. A scope and sequence includes the scope, which is the coverage of topics included in a curriculum, and the sequence, which is the arrangement of that coverage. Both the scope and the sequence of Curriculum by Years will differ slightly from Curriculum by Programs, but these differences will not be dramatically significant.

Both plans when completed will give teachers and parents a complete guide for each specific year and for each specific program. The guides of the lower years will include narration suggestions, teaching notes, exams, reading schedules and more in the subjects of history, science, natural history, geography, literature, art, citizenship and music. The upper years will turn to a humanities approach with regard to history, integrating literature, primary sources, geography, art history, citizenship and philosophy. The upper years will contain all that is included for the lower years, but will also include extensions in writing and Great Ideas Discussion prompts.

### What is Curriculum by Years?

Curriculum by Years is the scope and sequence used by parents and teachers who do not wish to combine their children together in most lessons. This allows each child to progress at their own level from one year to the next with book lists and topics of study specific to the particular year they are studying. This is the curriculum of which I've completed Year One: The Complete Guide. I'm currently working on Year Two: The Complete Guide.

### What is Curriculum by Programs?

Curriculum by Programs is the scope and sequence used by parents and teachers who wish to combine their students together into groups, working more often under the same umbrellas of topics and history time periods, often using the same books. I'm currently working on Foundations: Early School and Program I: Lower School B. The programs currently in progress are modeled after the PNEU programs of which Ms. Mason was the founder, but with some alterations.

## Who is Charlotte Mason?

Charlotte Mason (1842-1923) was a British educator whose ideas and methods focused on living ideas, the science of relations, habit training and so much more.

She became a teacher and then later established the House of Education, a training school for governesses. While teaching, she realized that the parents of children being educated would benefit from access to basic knowledge about children and education. The Parents' Educational Union or PEU was formed and later a periodical review was created to aid in this effort. In 1892, the word National was added to PEU and became PNEU, or Parents' National Educational Union.

She wrote a series of geography books and then later a six volume set of books setting forth her teaching ideas and methods of education.

Some of the terms and words which are most familiar to us in connection with Charlotte Mason include narration, living books, habit training, focused lessons, copywork, prepared dictation, nature study, handcrafts and artist and composer studies.

## What was a PNEU program?

A PNEU (Parents' National Educational Union) school was a school which followed the principles of Charlotte Mason. The PNEU created programs which were issued each term and were sent out to enrolled schools and families. Each program listed the books (for both students and teachers) and instructional work meant to be taught/studied for the term as well as the needed exams for that term. Each program included the work expected for each Form.

## What are forms?

Forms were how the educational years were grouped and divided in a Charlotte Mason curriculum. Form I included Years 1-3; Form II included Years 4-6; Form III included Years 7-8, Form IV included Year 9; Form V included Years 10-11 and Form VI included Year 12.

## Is this curriculum secular?

This curriculum is designed without religion, with the idea that those who wish to add it may do so as they wish. A couple of the fiction selections have a very Christian “feel” to them. I find these to be beautiful works of literature and would not want to exclude them based solely on the premise that the author was a Christian. I would feel this way about authors of other religions as well. My focus is in providing inspiring and imaginative literature to children. I have moved books to either optional reading lists or to free additional reading lists that were known for being specifically unfair to other faiths. Having said this, however, I do also try to balance the desire to not offend with the opportunity to teach new perspective. If you come across a book that is particularly offensive, then please let me know.

## How is Curriculum by Programs arranged?

With Curriculum by Programs, children in Pre-Preparatory, Preparatory and Year One will begin the Early School level in Foundations and will remain at this level for three years or until each student has been deemed ready to move on to Lower School B. This foundation level does not fit within the historical divisions laid out for the remaining levels. Only when your student has moved to Lower School B, will students begin to work through the programs according to historical time period divisions.

Children in Lower School B and higher will work through the programs according to the following historical time period divisions:

- Program I –Pre-17<sup>th</sup> Century History
- Program II -16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Century History
- Program III -19<sup>th</sup> Century History
- Program IV -20<sup>th</sup>+ Century History

American, World and British History follow these divisions, while Ancient History begins in Year Five and follows its own divisions.

This arrangement allows children to spend more time in one specific group before moving on to the next. This will make combining children together a little easier and will compare to grade levels less specifically. Children can move into and out of groups based on their needs rather than based on the typical year-to-year movement.

Year One fit best in Early School, since Year One students were typically receiving a more specific but gentle year of their own anyway. Year One students did not study history within the same time periods as the rest of the school generally did. This makes their year more unique and was better aligned with children in their beginning years. Year Four, too, typically had their own introductory year and better aligned with children in Lower School B. This allows them to share in many books, resources and lessons, yet, as the oldest in their group, receive extensions to their study.

## What type of schedule will the programs follow?

The programs will follow the new suggested daily schedule. You can find a sample of this schedule along with the blog article which explains it at the website. Look for the post titled “Renovating the Routine”. This new daily schedule was designed for these programs, since combining children together is more accessible with them.

## What does a program include?

Each program will be designed for a 3 term/36 week year\*. The programs have been divided into two parts: an outline guide and the corresponding lesson guide(s). The outline guide will include the complete books lists, a suggested schedule, teaching notes, recitation selections and suggestions for picture study, music appreciation, songs and handcrafts. The lesson guide will include the lesson plans for all of the main books for its suggested level (s) as well as exams. Subjects included are history, citizenship, natural history & science, geography, literature and poetry.

\*Typical PNEU programs were designed for one term, but these programs will be designed for the entire year.

## Can my student wait until Year Five to study World History?

Students can omit the World History stream (which uses *A Child's History of the World* by V. M. Hillyer) when using the Curriculum by Program's scope and sequence, if you prefer. You would then pick up ancient history in Year Five as it was traditionally added in PNEU programs. You would have completed one full history rotation (4 years) of American History and would have begun British History (which uses *Our Island Story* by H. E. Marshall) in Year Four.

There is certainly enough room in the schedule to complete both streams of history (American and World). It is designed to be included in the final year of Foundations and the first two years of Lower School B, so please don't feel that studying both streams simultaneously will be overwhelming for your students. This option is included for those families who feel strongly about beginning with American History only.