

# FAQ

I thought that I would try to collect some frequently asked questions and then post them and their answers here in one place. :) I will come back to this post and add to it, as needed.

**Question: Why don't you have complete reading schedules for each Year-such as found at Ambleside Online?**

**Answer:**

1. I feel that in order for a reading schedule to have good balance-reasonable and developmentally appropriate amounts of input and output requirements each week-then the creator (that's me) needs to be fully aware of what will be happening with each and every reading. I should not only know what is being read, but how much of it, what the follow-up to that reading might be and what readings and follow-ups are happening throughout that day and throughout the week in that subject. That is a lot to know. Unfortunately, it is hard for me to know all of this without first having spent a great deal of time studying the books, making notes of what should be discussed beforehand, narration suggestions and also any other additional books, resources and activities to follow-up with that particular reading.

So, yes, I can divide up a list of books so that the number of pages each week is roughly equivalent and so that the reading total per week matches what is reasonable for a particular age/grade, but this division only works for so long. It does not take into account that some books have more complex sentences than others or are filled with a lot of information, which means these readings should have fewer pages set aside for them. Some books require a great deal more in preparatory work before beginning the reading than others. What about books that need more time for discussion or narration after the reading? These too need fewer pages per reading allotted per week. Bad habits develop when children are overwhelmed with too much reading to accomplish in one day. They tend to read less carefully, not connecting to it well. I really want to avoid putting the child in this position in the first place.

Charlotte Mason set aside page counts as one of her methods for dealing with this issue. Her page counts aren't a perfect match for this curriculum, although they do make good guidelines. Additionally, her books advise that the daily schedule should vary between subjects which require more attention and concentration vs.

those which do not. Both her page count guidelines and her emphasis on creating schedules which vary show her awareness of the need for maintaining balance.

2. Because I have not completed my study notes for every book in each subject and each year, then posting reading schedules now will almost certainly need to be adapted. It is only after working through these books that I have a better sense of what the focus will be, what skills fit that age/Year and how to best utilize those skills with that focus. The complete guides will reflect an enormous amount of thought and consideration.

3. This curriculum is entirely different in that I'm not just listing some books and a way to divide them up each week, leaving each individual family to sort out how and in what way to use them. This curriculum has been designed to manage all that might be needed, providing families with much needed support.

4. Also, this curriculum is developing slowly-I'm still teaching and raising my own children-it is very likely that book availability will continue to change. This, along with my own need to change out books as I develop my guides, assures that the book lists will see some changes. This too will affect reading schedules.

Perhaps, I can add the reading schedules, but with the caveat that they will almost certainly be changed when the final and complete guides are published. This is something I'm willing to consider, because I definitely understand how helpful this would be.

**Question: Is this a pure Charlotte Mason curriculum?**

**Answer:**

In general, I'm not really sure that it is possible for any curriculum of today to be pure Charlotte Mason. If someone completely recreated her own work, with only very minor substitutions and adjustments, then you would still –even then-be creating something that was somewhat in opposition to her own ideas of embracing change and adaptation.

This curriculum is not pure Charlotte Mason, but it does lean very heavily on Charlotte Mason's ideas and methods, although not to the exclusion of others. I'm always open to educational philosophies which uphold my core principles about teaching and education. I prefer not to be cornered into one particular label over

another; this allows me to write and develop a curriculum which incorporates all that I believe. One of my overall goals for this curriculum is to create something that is modern, developmentally appropriate for children, but yet adheres to a set of standards.

A Mind in the Light gives a little more weight to all sciences, without sacrificing the intended purposes of nature study/natural history. This shows up with the inclusion of textbooks in the high school years. Charlotte Mason also used textbooks, including in science, at this level as well. So, I'm not sure that this is really a difference between her approach and mine. Perhaps, it is more a difference between my curriculum and other curricula available today which is modeled after Charlotte Mason.

Since so little is known about writing, particularly with regard to the upper years, I have expanded and adapted as I felt best adhered to her ideas, but yet still prepared a student for the advanced writing needed for higher level learning. This is one area that especially troubles many parents, who feel the need for more explicit direction and instruction in this and in scaffolding. Writing classically, based on the Progymnasmata, has influenced some of the writing expansion in these years. These ideas, along with more practically focused lessons which are based on college level expectations, are important to how I approach writing in the upper years.

While the literature in this curriculum includes a great deal of classic children's literature, many of them titles which have been around for a while, I do include a number of more modern titles. This is actually true for all of the other subjects as well as literature. More importantly, I have placed these books very carefully in developmentally appropriate years, ensuring that children do not feel frustrated by these literature selections.

Like the Parents' Review articles published by Charlotte Mason and the PNEU, I hope to offer teaching notes and articles to support parents and offer as much in explicit help as I can.

**Question: Will you be creating guides with selections for copywork and dictation specific to each Year?**

**Answer:**

At some point I do hope to do this, but it is not a priority for me right now. I'm going to focus my attention on creating complete guides for each year for now. I do have some teaching notes on copywork and dictation at the website, but I should probably fill those out a little more and make them printable too. This I could do sooner rather than later. I also have linked two levels of a free public domain book that I personally use for dictation. This could be used if you do not wish to pull your dictation selections straight from your student's current books. These guides would take time to create, as I would want to be very meticulous in my effort, considering and evaluating the selections carefully.

**Question: Is this a secular curriculum?**

**Answer:**

Yes, although some 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.

My overall goal is to encourage parents to choose their own religious and worldview books as they see fit, thus allowing this curriculum to include many and not few. I recognize that the original Charlotte Mason curriculum included Bible study and other Christian reading selections, but I wish to omit that portion for this curriculum. You may always add this part back. I would also argue that many curricula today which have modeled itself after Charlotte Mason have added in their own particular approach to Christianity and is, therefore, not exactly as she would have created it either.

**Question: Does the complete guide for each year include everything that I need for that year? Why are some sections of the complete guide published separately?**

**Answer:**

Yes! For all of the subjects for which I currently include in a guide: natural history, science, geography, literature, poetry, history and art and music study-these are included in the complete guide.

You might wish to buy the reformatted companion albums for the years which have them, but even these books are not required. The latter are usually just created for convenience and are put together to contain the needed book sources into one volume. Usually these books are available to be purchased used, checked out at a library and many times can be freely downloaded from the public domain.

I publish guides for books individually, for subjects by year separately and a complete guide for each year. This works for two reasons: it allows some families to use only the portions of the curriculum that fits their needs and it allows me to publish as I have something ready. The latter also helps families who wish to use the whole curriculum, but who are still waiting on me to finish the particular year they need. At least with some subjects available, they then have some support available to them.