

# 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 graduated with honors with a Bachelor's in English – Creative Writing, while my younger daughter has currently just begun working on her degree.

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. The schedule does allow for a better flow of joining students together, even with this plan, in that children will take breaks, have nature experiences, sing songs, study foreign languages, etc. at the same time. You could certainly also adapt this approach so that more books are shared, particularly during the Children's Hour.

Currently Published:

- Year One: The Complete Guide
- Year Two: The Complete Guide

Currently in Progress: Year Three: 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. These programs are modeled after the PNEU programs of which Ms. Mason was the founder, but with some alterations.

Currently Published:

- Foundations: The Outline Guide for Early School
- Foundations Lesson Guide –Year One
- Program 1: The Outline Guide for Lower School B
- Program 1: The Outline Guide for Lower School A
- Program 2: The Outline Guide for Lower School B
- Program 2: The Outline Guide for Lower School A
- Program 3: The Outline Guide for Lower School B

Currently in Progress: Program 1: Lesson Guide for Lower School B

Following Soon After: Program 2: Lesson Guide for Lower School A

## 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 a 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 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. It is possible to complete the program with only the outline guide if parents and teachers prefer to create their own lesson plans.

\*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.

## Why are there only lesson plans for Year One in Foundations Lesson Guide –Year One?

The Foundations Outline Guide is a program guide for the early years, including Year One. Since formal lessons are not meant to start until Year One, complete lesson plans will only be written for Year One students, which are included in the lesson guide. There are sample schedules in the outline guide, but the thought in this guide is to keep lessons lighter and more flexible, particularly for the Pre-Preparatory and Preparatory Levels.

## Distinguish between Foundations Lesson Guide –Year One and Year One: The Complete Guide

Year One: The Complete Guide was designed to follow the scope and sequence for Curriculum by Years vs. Foundations -Year One which was designed to follow the scope and sequence for Curriculum by Programs. The latter guide allows for more books to be shared with students of nearby ages as well as set up to follow the same time period in history for all ages. American History is the main focus for history (although World History using *A Child's History of the World* is still included...it's just optional). Literature includes many of the same books but with some new ones and a new arrangement. Natural History includes many of the same topics, but the new guide allows families to choose which ones to study and which length of time to study it. Geography has also had some changes in book selections and order. You can't go wrong with either guide or plan –the core ideas are very similar. The visions are altered, so this affected the scope and sequence.

## Describe Lower School B

Children will move on into Lower School B after Year One is completed or when parents feel their student is ready for it. This level combines Years Two-Four, but Year Four will have less in common with Year Two and Year Three students in that they will still share the same time period of study overall and share some books together, but they will also have more books of their own – books which reflect their growing maturity. The schedules are aligned as much as possible and picture study, music appreciation and many other studies can be shared as well.

## Describe movement from one program to the next

Program 1 focuses on Pre-17th Century history, so students in this program will study Native Americans and early settlements of America. Students in Foundations Year One will also study Native Americans and the story of the first Thanksgiving, so this aligns well with this guide. Year

One students always study these topics, since they are not part of the historical time period divisions. Program 2 focuses on 16th-18th Century history, so these students study this time period in American history. A student would begin in Foundations and then move on to Program 1, 2, 3 or 4, depending on where you want to begin you study of history or where your older students are in the study of history. Lower School B is always designed to meet the needs of students in Years Two-Four no matter what time period they study. The idea is that you would then move on to the next program the following year, following a chronological flow in history. Curriculum by Programs does not make it so that you would not have to buy a new program or set of lesson plans each year (you would have to do this with the Curriculum by Years plan), but that if you choose this approach with children of varying ages then they can be kept together in at least the same historical time period, picture study, songs, etc. as well as children closer in age sharing many of the same books, ideally reducing the number of books to be read aloud –particularly with children in the younger years.

For example, your children could start in Foundations and Program 1: Lower School B together [perhaps a Year One and a Year Three student]. The schedule allows for the flow of the day to be similar and you choose whichever artist, song, composer, handcraft, etc. you wish for both children to study together. A couple of the books used for American History in Foundations will also be read in Program 1: LSB.

The following year, your Year Two student will move to Program 2: LSB along with your Year Four student. Both children can work from this Program guide, but Year Four students will see more differences, due to book changes and expectation. The following year, both students will move to Program 3 –with one student still in LSB, but the other now in LSA (Years Five and Six). Again, students will study the same time period and you can choose new composers, artists, etc. so that both students can share this study. Some books from LSB might be shared with students in LSA, but usually only a few. Books chosen for reading aloud during the Children’s Hour can be selected to best augment sharing. Older students will also be given books to read independently, so this will help offer appropriate upgraded choices as well.

Some years will have students studying the same thing, no matter which program they are using. For example, in Year Three, all students will study their home country and read *Paddle-to-the-Sea*. The additional book for geography for that year will change according to the time period, but the former book will stay the same.