**English Language Arts:**  
**(by Bruce McNeice with adapted sections from ‘Teaching Children’ by Diane Lopez)**

**Overview of Language Arts (Charlotte Mason Method):**  
  
The subject of ‘English Language Arts’ is probably the most involved multi-faceted subjects and the reading and communication skills mastered in this subject affect success in every other subject, and indeed the whole of life. Because of this, we will address the English Language Arts subject first.

A few moments of thoughtful contemplation provide the emphasis as to the universal value of the following:

* *a ready understanding and/or enjoyment of written material;*
* *a confident ability to write an opinion, instruction, report?*
* *an effective expression of love, sympathy or apology;*
* *an ability to communicate to one or more people the same kinds of things just listed, but orally, rather than in writing, and to be able to do so without undue self-consciousness or paralysing fear.*

Education should be for living, for every part of life, and for all of life. As in every other aspect of the CM program, the approach to language arts is from this broad perspective.  
  
In an article by Dr Ruth Beechick, (‘How Not to Teach Writing’) she tells of a mother in a chat group, who wrote a wonderful line about her curriculum plan. She said…  
  
“For reading we read; for writing we write.”  
  
The simplicity of this is worth remembering. It is worth posting on a cupboard door for a reminder of what the main core of language is. The more you read to and with your child, the more they will catch your love of reading for themselves. The more regularly you have your child practice neat and accurate writing, the better their handwriting will become. After years of exposure to quality literature, lots of practice with oral narration, then more practice with written narration, eventually their overall writing should improve naturally.  
  
Be sure to do only short writing sessions though. Don’t labour over it. In the early Primary school, they should mainly do oral retelling plus short sessions of ‘copy-work’; then from year four or five they can begin written narrations which are a retelling of a story they have read or something they have learnt. Make it a daily habit to retell (orally or written) what has been read or learnt.  
  
The following lists provide an overview of the way language arts, as a whole, are covered in a Charlotte Mason education, and the resources we have found to work best.

**Instructions for Learning to Read, Enjoying Literature & Literature Analysis – (all Year levels):**  
  
Because competence in reading is so crucial, a lack of this skill can have a profoundly damaging effect on a child's academic progress, and even more importantly, on his or her self-image. This fact should not, however, be felt by either parents or children as a grim, threatening burden. One of the chief elements in reading readiness should be an early pleasurable relationship with books and words. The child who enters school with a background of having been extensively conversed with and read to for all of his or her life, has received the best possible preparation for language skills.  
  
A parent or grandparent (very young child on lap) turns the pages of a picture book, reading the brief text and always allowing the child time to ask questions, point out things that catch his or her interest, etc. A person reading a book to a young child

Description automatically generated with low confidenceResponses will differ from child to child. Some may soon become restless at first. The child should be able to jump down at will and terminate the story session at any point without receiving any subtle messages of impatience or disappointment on the part of the parent. But the very brief sessions should continue each day, always guided by the child's response. (Occasionally this may mean waiting a few weeks before making a new start.) Another child may rapidly develop an ever-increasing attention span and level of comprehension and request frequent story or poem sessions. Other children will fall somewhere between the two extremes.  
  
Most children are ready at six to start formal reading instruction in a warm, supportive environment, with a teacher or parent who uses appropriate methods and who is sensitive to individual needs of the child. This matter of responsiveness to the specific child is extremely important, for there are some children who may benefit from not starting such instruction until age seven or older.  Children themselves can provide the guidelines, but as suggested above, they need to be offered the opportunity to respond to books at a very early age. During such early story-time sessions over a period of several years, the countless parental answers to children's questions about what they see and hear in relation to books give them a splendid store of reading readiness information. More than that, the children develop a sense of wonder, joy and anticipation in relation to books and reading because of the relationship-building effect of story-time.  
  
But what about school-age children who have not yet had this sort of preparation? The Homeward program is designed to provide reading instruction that will involve children, parents and teachers in the same kind of positive relationship with books and reading that was outlined above.  
  
Because the importance of a positive attitude toward books and reading has been so strongly emphasised, it might be appropriate to add a clarifying note. We are strongly convinced not only of the importance of reading competence, but also of the lifelong benefits a friendship with books can offer a child. This program is not, however, aimed only at children who have a particularly strong affinity for books and reading. There is a realistic awareness of the great diversity in interests and natural propensities among children-- an awareness that playing competitive games, observing the natural world, building and making things, training a dog or a horse, planting a garden or any one of dozens of other worthwhile activities may be so strongly preferred by some children that they have little or no time for reading other than in their school-work.  
  
Such children will benefit greatly from a CM programme with its broad-spectrum approach and its appreciation of non-academic as well as academic activities. At the same time, they will be given the reading skills and the positive attitudes about what books have to offer that are of great practical as well as aesthetic value. On the other hand, the book-oriented child will find enrichment, encouragement, and an opportunity to fully develop his or her literary tastes and skills.  
   
The Homeward reading program places an emphasis on several important overall objectives:  
  
l. Establishment and maintenance of a pleasurable, enthusiastic atmosphere in relation to books and to the processes of reading instruction.  
  
2. Use of especially well-written literature to be read aloud to early graders (material above their own reading level) or assigned to be read by more experienced readers.  
  
3. Encouragement and development of both factual comprehension and a response to imaginative, creative ideas in material read by students.  
  
4. Encouragement of questions and logical reasoning on the part of students in relation to material read.  
  
5. Inclusion of contemporary as well as classic literature, and of biographical, historical, and cultural works, etc., reading with a wide variety of settings, characters, and ideas.  
  
6. Phonics instruction which not only enables students to read controlled-vocabulary material, but which also prepares them to decode unfamiliar words and to move ahead in their reading as rapidly as they are able.  
  
7. Thorough mastery on an individual basis of each sequenced skill in a specific area before moving on to the next concept.  
  
8. Development of, listening skills (accuracy and comprehension) in relation both to materials read aloud and to oral instruction.  
  
9. Development of reading-related oral skills in a variety of contexts and at appropriate grade levels: narrating to the teacher and class a story that has previously been listened to or read (see item 2); reading aloud to the teacher and class from a reading text or selected piece of children's literature; presenting an oral book report. (Other oral skills will be outlined in the discussion of English.)  
  
10. Inclusion of a "story-time" period at all grade levels in which a wide variety of especially appealing books or poems are read aloud, just for enjoyment. (No assignments or testing to be done on this material.)

**Literature: Choosing 'Living Books':**  
Whatever else it may be in children's experience, literature should be, first, last and always full of wonder and delight.   
  
*“It should be eluding Mr. McGregor with Peter Rabbit, and sharing lessons in friendship with Frog and Toad; slipping into another wonderfully imagined world with the children of the Narnia tales; watching Rikki Tikki Tavi conquer the cobra; striving suspensefully for right and justice with Miss Bianca; sailing with the Swallows and Amazons; and gazing in amazement with Aladdin at heaps of treasure. It should be racing for the silver skates, hiding in the greenwood with Robin, watching the secret garden come to life, rescuing a fair maiden as a knight of King Arthur, finding the footprint on Crusoe's lonely island, and escaping the Cyclops with Odysseus: high adventure and cosy corners, exotic sights and sounds and the imagined taste of a piece of newly baked bread; other lands and other worlds-and a fresh view of the warmth and security of a home.”* (from 'Teaching Children' by Dianne Lopez)  
  
It was the response of wonder and delight that Charlotte Mason saw as an open channel into children's minds and imaginations. Through this channel, important truths about themselves as people, about how life should be lived, about God and His world, would be received in a natural, unforced manner. These truths would be observed and, when acted upon by the will of a child, would be made a part of his or her own being. It is in harmony with this view that we place great importance on the use of literature throughout this program and especially so in the area of language arts.  
  
**Living Books:** Returning to the concept that fine literature provides an open channel into the consciousness of children, it is clear that what is being discussed is not some form of indoctrination. It is, rather, a matter of providing children with the kind of material Charlotte Mason referred to as "living books." Such books, whether they are fantasies, or historical or contemporary realism, embody in the characterisation and the events that which is true to the human heart, that which is emotionally and spiritually real.  
  
This basic truth in the fabric of the writing reveals itself in an intrinsic support of Judeo-Christian values: honesty, integrity, courage, loyalty, faithfulness, compassion, etc. Not only that, but because there is truth at the core of the writer's thinking, situations arise in the books which display dishonesty, hypocrisy, cowardice, betrayal, fickleness, harshness and the like. Often the situations are somewhat complex, and as children read, they must think, question, evaluate, and bore their way through to the real issues. As they identify with a character, they are unconsciously making choices with him or her, seeing how cause and effect work, and learning about consequences.  
  
Book by book, the readers are feeling the lift of spirit that comes as they identify, with characters who demonstrate courage, self-sacrifice, generosity, etc. As they observe struggles between good and evil, readers also learn much about human nature. The characters of fine literature are portrayed with truth and keen perception, not as flat, cardboard people, moved about by a writer simply to implement a catchy plot. And while mediocre stories are essentially the same no matter where they are set, quality literature opens the windows and doors of the world and takes its readers into the surroundings, the thoughts, the realities of life in places the reader may never see. A gifted writer unfolds the character of someone who is part of a faraway culture – or someone just "around the corner" whose life is different because of a handicap, tragic home circumstances, or racial background – the reader can to some extent understand the lives of others.  
  
Beyond the growing awareness of other people and places, other ways of life, that develops during the thoughtful reading of literature', questions about a variety of social and moral issues may also be generated by the historical background or specific circumstances of a story: Mark Twain's The Prince and the Pauper, for example, or Erik Christian Haugaard's The Little Fishes.  
  
**No Lectures:** In every case, it is important for the teacher simply to bring the literature and the students together. Let the one communicate to the other without constantly intervening in overt efforts to "point out the moral values of the story". Skillful questions, when appropriate, will help the students themselves to identify, discuss and ask their own questions about issues and values.  
  
**Narration & Discussion:** One of Charlotte Mason’s most important learning strategies was a comprehension technique called **'narration'.** The child is required to listen intently to a reading (only once) and then retell it as closely as he/she can. Miss Mason believed this helped a child to interact with the material in an original way and to assimilate and connect information in the process. She felt it was important that children be exposed to only the best literature rather than 'twaddle' which was how she defined literature written 'down' to a child's level.

A time of attentive listening and narration is often naturally followed by a short discussion, where the curious questions of the children are answered, or the student’s thoughts are drawn out through a series of open questions to fully discuss and/or debate the topic.

**Composer Study and Picture Study** uses similar skills. Picture study involves looking with concentration at a great work of art. The student then turns over the painting, and it is described from memory. A retelling of the picture is followed by brief discussion. This allows the children to become familiar with many great artists over the course of their education.

**Short Lessons & Experiential Learning:** Charlotte Mason believed in delivering short lessons of 20 minutes of focussed attention, then changing to a learning activity that engages a different part of the brain. She scheduled a structured morning of basic academics and then dedicating time in the afternoon to real-life experiential learning through hands-on projects, work experience, play, exploration, nature walks, visits to the museum, and reading. This would allow education to be a life-enriching, joyous experience, and adventure.

**Literature as Writing:** Literature-related classwork in English should also focus strongly on each book or poem as a piece of writing. At appropriate levels, consideration should be given to the ways in which the writer achieves certain purposes. In discussing fiction topics this would include: how he or she tells the story (as a third person outside the story, as a first-person narrator, etc.), what level of language is used, what the overall tone of the book is (humorous, dramatic, warmly human, etc.), how description is used, and how characters are developed.   
  
**Poetry:** In connection with poetry, attention appropriate to specific grade levels should be given to: the form of the poem, the use (or absence of) rhyme, the effect of the sounds of the words chosen, the vividness or subtlety of the visual images, the intensity of meaning created by the compression of poetry in contrast with the greater openness and expansiveness of prose.

**A Panoramic View:** The wonders and delights of the worlds upon worlds encompassed in literature are not only of intrinsic value in themselves. They also encourage children to move more readily out of the small, "me-centred" world in which they begin their experience. Far vistas, different people, interesting words and phrases, and fresh ideas expand their horizons and provide from another angle that broad, panoramic view of life and of the world that is such an important goal of a CM program.  
  
**What is a ‘Living Book’?** … Some questions to use in evaluating the literary quality of a book:

* *Does the story catch and hold the interest of a reader?*
* *Is the story timeless, in the sense that regardless of when it was written it can still be enjoyed and related to today and, presumably, could continue to be so?*
* *Is the story credible? Allowing a reasonable amount of latitude for fictional invention, do the people speak and behave the way people in the particular place and time of the story would be likely to speak and act? Are the emotions and reactions of the characters true to the reality of human experience?*
* *Are the setting, culture and any factual background events depicted with reasonable depth and accuracy?*
* *Are the characters well rounded and do they develop as the story goes on, changing in response to events, insights they have gained, etc.?*
* *Is the overall language use, vocabulary and writing style excellent and in harmony with the book as a whole?*
* *Are the values, truths or "lessons" which might be drawn from the story an integral, natural part of the whole? Does the reader simply see and infer them on his own without the tacking on of sermons or heavy-handed moralising?*

In this connection, it is important to realise that just because a book's purpose is to emphasise Christian standards, or even to evangelise readers, this does not make it a good book in the literary sense. Literary artists create literature; highly competent craftspeople create good, worthwhile books; good intentions without other qualifications only result in dreadful books.  
  
  
**Whole Books Rather Than Fragments:**Although we may sometimes need to use an extract of a piece of literature, wherever possible allow the child to experience a whole book. Dianne Lopez writes:

*“It was Charlotte Mason's conviction that the child should work steadily through a complete book. Little snippets of information here and there just don't hang together. Our generation is prone to amuse itself with fragmentary information and resources. We flip on the TV for brief programs, and then we think we know about the subjects they dealt with. A few paragraphs in a magazine, and we think we've formed an opinion. What is happening so often is that we are merely forming a habit of amusing our interest, and then forgetting the fragments . . .*  
*Because they've tackled a complete book, the children become acquainted with its flow and its use of language. They are students of another person – the author.*  
*Further, they are allowed to notice the content themselves. As they aren't forced to memorise facts, they are free to react to the writing themselves. They are the ones who decide what parts they consider important. It becomes an active experience of the mind, personality, and language.”* (Lopez, 1988)

**Handwriting/ Copywork (Charlotte Mason Style):**  
**Grades Prep to 2:** Here is the process that Charlotte’s method follows.  
1.Teach the stroke or letter using large muscles first. Draw in the air or have the child draw on a chalkboard or whiteboard or in a pan of raw rice.  
2.Teach a stroke or two and then the letters that use that stroke. Be sure to keep handwriting lessons short, no longer than 5 or 10 minutes.  
3.When the child is ready, have him write a stroke and its letters on paper. Always emphasize doing one’s best effort. Encourage the child to make his stroke or letter look just like the model before him.  
4.As soon as possible, combine the letters the child has learned so he can write words.  
5.When the child has learned uppercase letters, move on to lowercase letters.  
6.Once the child has learned all the letters, have him continue practicing them by doing copywork. Give him a good model of meaningful sentences from Scripture, literature, or poetry and let him copy that model bit by bit, still keeping lessons short and emphasizing best effort.

It is interesting that before pencils were invented, children did not learn ball and stick writing. Even the young child learnt cursive from day-one because they were using a quill and ink, and it was easier to learn to flow the letters from one to another from the start. They ended up being neater writers than has occurred with the more recent practice of beginning with ball and stick, then progressing to cursive script.   
  
**Grade 3 to 8** (or higher if the handwriting is not neat):  
Use carefully chosen Bible verses or a line or paragraph from other preferred inspirational literature.   
Step 1:  Parent reads the section to the child.  
Step 2:  Parent explains any difficult words or phrases.   
Step 3:  Child reads the section out loud, to the parent.  
Step 4:  Child copies the text in his or her neatest handwriting. Allow no slipshod work. Train the habit of neat and accurate work. It is preferable for the child to produce one sentence or one word that is neat and accurate, than a whole page of scrappy work that is not legible.

Note: the early to middle Primary level child should write what can be accomplished in just 5 to 10 minutes. Don't drag it on. If he or she is losing focus, don't fight; just change the activity for now and get back to it later the same day. It is not long to focus, and just a little each day will develop their skills without creating haters of writing. It is important to train the child in focused attention for short periods, and to do neat and accurate work.

**ENGLISH RESOURCES Prep to Year 3**

**Phonics/Reading instruction:** Start with:

* *LEM Phonics ( http://www.lem.com.au )  or...*
* *Ruth Beechick’s ‘Three R’s’  ( https://www.bookdepository.com/ )*

The LEM Phonics Programme is our preferred recommendation for a complete, definitive language starter program achieving excellent results in both schools and home schoolers. Evelyn Garrard has developed this brilliant reading programme in the Australian English language for Australian children, making it simple to teach and easy to understand. Unlike many phonics programs with limited scope, LEM Phonics is a comprehensive programme, taking the student through the first four years of education and beyond.

Alternatively, if you can’t afford LEM, then `Ruth Beechick's methods, as described in her Three R's series, provide a natural no-frills start using resources you already have at home.  
  
**Oral Narration:** (oral composition) of various subjects--literature, history, picture study, and so on: This is absolutely foundational to the entire Charlotte Mason method. Allow your student a year or two to develop into a fluent narrator, but do not neglect this part of language arts.

* *Beginning readers might gain confidence from classics retold in A Primary Reader by E. Louise Smythe ($)*

**Copywork:** This will expose children to the form of written sentences on a page, and be the beginning of learning to spell, as well as covering handwriting practice. You may choose to use a handwriting curriculum as well, but be careful not to burden young children with too much written work. Less is more, and children should write only as much as they can write perfectly.

* *Recommended:   
  - “Delightful Handwriting” by Lanaya Gore from* [*www.simplycharlottemason.com*](http://www.simplycharlottemason.com) *then…  
  - “A Child’s Copybook Reader (Volumes 1-3)” from www.simplycharlottemason.com … then…  
  - “Print to Cursive Proverbs” (www.simplycharlottemason.com)*

**English Literature:** Refer to the CM-Australia Booklist which has Literature linked to a History sequence of topics.

**ENGLISH RESOURCES Grades 4-6**

*“This scope and sequence, if followed throughout the school career, will produce children who can write well, because they have something to say. They will learn handwriting, grammar, and spelling, within the context of writing, not as discrete subjects. No formal composition curriculum is recommended here, but you may find one useful to introduce you and your child to various types of formal writing; however, you should be careful not to let a writing program supplant the natural growth as a writer that will occur if oral and written narration are used consistently across many years.*

*If you are beginning a Charlotte Mason education with an older child, you may need a year or so of oral narration before beginning written narration. If the student is old enough for written narration in general, you may wish to tape [digitally record] an occasional narration, and have the child transcribe it in writing, but the mental discipline of oral narration needs to be established before it can be transferred to written narration.”  ~ Karen Glass*

**Remedial Phonics/Reading instruction:** If the children do not have a solid grasp of spelling by now, then teach the phonics rules to help them confidently decode any word. Use…

* *LEM Phonics ( http://www.lem.com.au )  ...*

The LEM Phonics Programme is our preferred recommendation for a complete, definitive language starter programme achieving excellent results in both schools and home schoolers. Evelyn Garrard has developed this brilliant reading programme in the Australian English language for Australian children, making it simple to teach and easy to understand. Unlike many phonics programmes with limited scope, LEM Phonics is a comprehensive programme, taking the student through the first four years of education and beyond.

**Reading:** Children should begin reading most of their school-books for themselves during this time. Literature books can come from historical themes to reinforce the History topics of exploration. Instead of memorising dry facts from a history textbook, begin by reading the interesting stories of people, places, events and things. This will cover History (people and events), Geography (the places in which they lived); and Science (exploring nature and reading about the world around us, or about things and how they are made or function). We want to provide a broad feast of “living-books and ideas” as mental food for children’s minds to digest.   
Lists of suitable children’s books are given in the CM-Australia Booklists.

**Oral Narration** of various subjects. Narration of various subjects--literature, history, picture study, and so on: This is absolutely foundational to the entire Charlotte Mason method. Allow your student a year or two to develop into a fluent narrator, but do not neglect this part of language arts.

**Written Narration** should normally begin around age 10-11. Handwritten or typed narrations are fine. At this early stage, you should accept most written narrations without attempting to correct all the mistakes. The main goal is to encourage the student to get their thoughts down on paper (but don’t start this until they’ve had some months giving oral narrations). Becoming proficient with written narration will take a couple of years. Begin with one written narration per week, and increase to 2, then 3, as your child is ready to do more writing. Once a month, perhaps, you may want to edit and correct one narration, then train the student how to improve their writing from your edits.

**Beginning Grammar**. Once the child is writing, he/she has more use for grammar. You may choose to use a purchased curriculum, such as ‘Simply Grammar’, but it will also be sufficient during these years to teach more informally, limiting instruction to the eight or nine parts of speech, the four basic types of sentences (declarative, interrogative, imperative, exclamative), and a couple of simple punctuation and capitalization rules.

Our recommendation for an Australian resource is *“Learning Grammar through Copywork”* from [www.educationreformation.net](http://www.educationreformation.net)

With this resource, you learn how to teach grammar the Charlotte Mason way with real literature instead of staged examples. Grammar Through Copywork uses passages from classic literature for copywork, focussing on grammar concepts. 125 carefully selected passages each teaching a unique grammar concept. You can use this book for students from 7 or 8 years old and beyond. Each passage also has multiple grammar lessons which you can teach as you see the need. Answers and Teacher’s Notes are included. Each passage is examined carefully noting the grammar usage and then taken for dictation. 15 minutes a day is all it takes! Other benefits include expansion of vocabulary, improved spelling and good models of excellent writing. The best thing about this book is that it will also train the parent how to teach grammar from any passage. Concepts covered: Parts of Speech, The Sentence, Punctuation, Clauses. Your child will need a notebook for copying the passages, and a Primary Grammar Handbook would be beneficial but not essential.

Another fun resource is *‘The Little Grammar People”* by Nuri Mass, to learn grammar through a story, available from www.livingbookpress.com

**Handwriting, Copywork & Dictation:**

* *“Print to Cursive Proverbs” (*[*www.simplycharlottemason.com*](http://www.simplycharlottemason.com)*)*
* *“Learning Grammar through Copywork”* from [www.educationreformation.net](http://www.educationreformation.net)

Then moving on from earlier Copywork, this exercise of ‘Dictation’ will improve a child's spelling, but it does take time. Just through careful following the dictation procedure, many parents find that a child's spelling improves dramatically after a year or two of Dictation.

* “Spelling Wisdom” from [www.simplycharlottemason.com](http://www.simplycharlottemason.com) (use for Copywork if needed, then for Dictation)  
  Charlotte Mason began dictation exercises with students around the third or fourth grade. With that schedule in mind, here is a rough model of which books correspond to which grades:   
    
  Book 1: Grades 3 and 4:  
  - Grade 3 (Exercises 1–70)—Assign the whole passage to be transcribed.   
  - Grade 4 (Exercises 71–140)—Assign up to the whole passage. Dictate one or two sentences.  
    
  Book 2: Grades 5 and 6:   
  - Grade 5 (Exercises 1–70)—Assign up to the whole passage. Dictate two or three sentences.   
  - Grade 6 (Exercises 71–140)—Assign up to the whole passage. Dictate three or four sentences.

**Typing:** While the children should still practice ‘handwriting skills’ with Copywork, a typing program such as Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing can be used for written narration. This may assist some students with ‘written composition’ to get a flow of ideas as they are not having to think about their handwriting. If a child learns to touch type--speed is not too important in the first year.

* *Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing:*[*https://classicreload.com/mavis-beacon-teaches-typing.html*](https://classicreload.com/mavis-beacon-teaches-typing.html)

**English Literature:** Refer to the CM-Australia Booklist which has Literature linked to a History sequence of topics.

**ENGLISH RESOURCES Grades 7-8**

*“This scope and sequence, if followed throughout the school career, will produce children who can write well, because they have something to say. They will learn handwriting, grammar, and spelling, within the context of writing, not as discrete subjects. No formal composition curriculum is recommended here, but you may find one useful to introduce you and your child to various types of formal writing; however, you should be careful not to let a writing program supplant the natural growth as a writer that will occur if oral and written narration are used consistently across many years.*

*If you are beginning a Charlotte Mason education with an older child, you may need a year or so of oral narration before beginning written narration. If the student is old enough for written narration in general, you may wish to tape an occasional narration, and have the child transcribe it in writing, but the mental discipline of oral narration needs to be established before it can be transferred to written narration.”  ~ Karen Glass*

For older high school students who have not had the benefit of Charlotte Mason’s rich cultural and literary education over many years; we have found the iew.com program ‘Teaching Writing Structure and Style’ to be an excellent remediation and preparation for university.

**Formal Grammar** may be done at this time, preferably with one comprehensive book. After the course is completed, a grammar handbook will be useful as a reference tool to polish and correct grammar flaws that appear in written work.

* *“Fix-it Grammar”* is a popular choice (from www.iew.com).

**Oral Narration:** Again, this will always be an important part of a Charlotte Mason education.

**Written Narration**: You will gradually be increasing the number and length of your children¹s written narrations during these years. You should also be helping your child perfect the mechanics of writing and begin learning to edit and correct their mistakes. Doing this with one narration per week is fine, and it will reinforce the grammar and punctuation that is being studied separately.

**Handwriting/Copywork:** only if your child is still not writing neatly.

* *Copywork from Classic Literature  (for 13-15 year olds) from* [*www.educationreformation.net*](http://www.educationreformation.net)

**Dictation:** If your child is an excellent speller, and you do not feel the need to work on handwriting, this subject could be dropped, although it would be beneficial to continue once or twice per week, or use dictation in your foreign language program.

You should expect to see much better spelling during these years. However, if a child continues to use poor spelling, you may want to address the subject separately with a condensed LEM Phonics course.

* “Spelling Wisdom” from [www.simplycharlottemason.com](http://www.simplycharlottemason.com) (use for Dictation)  
    
  Book 3: Grades 7 and 8:  
  - Grade 7 (Exercises 1–70)—Assign the whole passage. Dictate up to one paragraph.   
  - Grade 8 (Exercises 71–140)—Assign the whole passage. Dictate up to one paragraph.

**Typing:** A typing program such as Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing (and Word-processing) is an important life-skill. It can assist your child for written narration. If a child learns to touch type--speed is not as important as accuracy.

* *Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing:*[*https://classicreload.com/mavis-beacon-teaches-typing.html*](https://classicreload.com/mavis-beacon-teaches-typing.html)

**English Literature:** Refer to the CM-Australia Booklist which has Literature linked to a History sequence of topics.  
For learning Literature Analysis there is a five volume course called “Excellence in Literature” (from [www.everydayeducation.com](http://www.everydayeducation.com)) which can be started in Year 8. The sequence would be …

* Yr 8: ‘Introduction to Literature
* Yr 9: ‘Literature and Composition’
* Yr 10: ‘American Literature’
* Yr 11: ‘British Literature’
* Yr 12: ‘World Literature’
* Any one of these years could be substituted with “Windows to the World: An Introduction to Literature Analysis” by Leisha Myers (from [www.iew.com](http://www.iew.com)) for example if you didn’t want to do American Literature, or if you are a late starter and only have one year to go eg., Yr 10 or 12.

**Tertiary Prep Writing Skills Course:**

* *Teaching Writing Structure & Style + Student Writing Intensive Level B from* [*www.iew.com*](http://www.iew.com)
* *The Elegant Essay from www.iew.com*  
   Reference Books:
* *Elements of Style by Strunk and White*
* *On Writing Well  by William Zinssar*

**ENGLISH RESOURCES Grades 9-10**

*“If you are beginning a Charlotte Mason education with an older child, you may need a year or so of oral narration before beginning written narration. If the student is old enough for written narration in general, you may wish to tape an occasional narration, and have the child transcribe it in writing, but the mental discipline of oral narration needs to be established before it can be transferred to written narration.”  ~ Karen Glass*

For older high school students who have not had the benefit of Charlotte Mason’s rich cultural and literary education over many years; we have found the iew.com program ‘Teaching Writing Structure and Style’ to be an excellent remediation and preparation for university.

**Grammar:** If you did not complete a formal grammar program, do that in grade 9. Otherwise, use your completed writing assignments or a grammar handbook to address grammatical problems that arise in writing. You may wish to do a short review of formal grammar before a child graduates, but most grammar instruction--and there should be some--ought to take place within the context of the student's writing.  
• Fix-it Grammar (from [www.iew.com](http://www.iew.com) )

**Oral Narration:** This is important, even at this age. You may occasionally wish to ask a student to give an oral narration in a formal way, such as a speech or presentation.

**Written Narration/Composition:** At this point, written narrations can become more focused, and the student can be introduced to different types of formal writing. In fact, you should make it a point to expose your children to different formats and allow them to structure their narrations in various ways. You may simply use reference books that address the subject of writing and style, such as Strunk and White's *‘Elements of Style’* and William Zinssar's *‘On Writing Well’* which should be read and applied to the student's writing; or a popular choice of home-educators is the programme *‘Teaching Writing Structure & Style’*, along with the Student Writing Intensives (Level B & C, and the Continuation Course).  
  
  
**Tertiary Prep Writing Skills Course:**

* *Teaching Writing Structure & Style + Student Writing Intensive Level B & C from* [*www.iew.com*](http://www.iew.com)
* *The Elegant Essay from www.iew.com*

Reference Books:

* *Elements of Style by Strunk and White*
* *On Writing Well by William Zinssar*

**Handwriting/Copywork:** only if your child is still not writing neatly.

* *Copywork from Classic Literature  (for 13-15 year olds) from www.educationreformation.net*

**Dictation:** If your child is an excellent speller, and you do not feel the need to work on handwriting, this subject could be dropped, although it may still be beneficial to continue once or twice per week, or use dictation in your foreign language program.

* “Spelling Wisdom” from [www.simplycharlottemason.com](http://www.simplycharlottemason.com) (use for Copywork if needed, then for Dictation)  
    
  Book 4: Grades 9 and 10:  
  - Grade 9 (Exercises 1–70)—Assign the whole passage. Dictate up to two paragraphs.  
  - Grade 10 (Exercises 71–140)—Assign the whole passage. Dictate up to two paragraphs.

**Typing:** A typing program such as Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing (and Word-processing) is an important life-skill. It can assist your child for written narration. If a child learns to touch type--speed is not important.

* *Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing:*[*https://classicreload.com/mavis-beacon-teaches-typing.html*](https://classicreload.com/mavis-beacon-teaches-typing.html)

**English Literature:** Refer to the CM-Australia Booklist which has Literature linked to a History sequence of topics.

For learning Literature Analysis there is a five-volume course called “Excellence in Literature” (from [www.everydayeducation.com](http://www.everydayeducation.com)) which can be started in Year 8. The sequence would be …

* Yr 8: ‘Introduction to Literature
* Yr 9: ‘Literature and Composition’
* Yr 10: ‘American Literature’
* Yr 11: ‘British Literature’
* Yr 12: ‘World Literature’
* Any one of these years could be substituted with “Window to the World: An Introduction to Literature Analysis” by Leisha Myers (from [www.iew.com](http://www.iew.com)) for example if you didn’t want to do American Literature, or if you are a late starter and only have one year to go eg., Yr 10 or 12.

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**Extra Natural Learning Ideas for English Language Arts …or …**   
**What to do if I don't have any curriculum resources yet:**  
  
**(i)** Read to your child(ren) in many different styles (Scriptures, poems, novels, National Geographics, biographies) and areas they are interested in. It helps to have a good ‘readable’ encyclopaedia set to be able to answer your children’s many questions at the point of highest interest - ie when they ask the question.  We recommend ‘World Book Encyclopaedia’, to be the best secular home reference resource for home-educators. (These days, search engines on the internet are also very accessible).  
*“I've always had a broad reading range and I share this as a friend with my children.  If you show an interest in reading, they will too. However gradual the interest; patience, enthusiasm and example are the keys.”*  (Karen McNeice)   
  
**(ii)** Join the library, arrange a tour of the facilities and services.  Find out about bulk loan arrangements (loans of more than the advertised number of books).  This facility is usually available through the larger municipal libraries.   
  
**(iii)** Diagnostic Tests:  These are only needed if you don’t have any idea about your child’s present grading.  Such tests can give you somewhere to head in relation to certain subjects, (especially Maths, Language Arts, Reading or Writing); but are not needed for other subjects.  
  
**(iv)** Handwriting:    Decide on a style that you favour e.g. Cursive Script, Modern Cursive, Foundation Style, or adapt your own. Don’t worry about trying to do the same style as the schools teach, because as their own guidelines and texts imply, everybody eventually forms their own style anyway. Legibility and flow (which is effective penmanship) are more important. Practise by using dictating and copying Scripture verses, pieces from novels, write letters, etc.  Practise! Practise!  Practise! In time, fine-motor-skill-muscles will strengthen and not tire so easily.  
  
**(v)** The subjects of English or Language Arts are really all about ‘communication’.  If you do not have any resources to teach spelling, grammar and vocabulary, you could develop these skills by simply working with the student to edit and re-edit their 'assessment items' (i.e.  the written essay; oral report on audio cassette; creative project; book log; and their journal of learning activities, and any other assignments that you set for them.)  By correcting the spelling, grammar and overall structure of an assignment, and then having the student re-work the assignment until they have an excellent presentation, the student will be improving their 'English communication skills' in a natural way.  
  
In response to this advice, some parents might say :“But I’m not good at spelling and grammar.”...or...”It’s not my strong point. I just don’t feel confident with spelling or grammar. How can I possibly correct their work ‘in a natural way’?”

The important thing is to start where you are at, and with what you already know; then progress from there. You will most probably know more spelling than your child, and have more of an idea of how words flow together to make sense (grammar).  But you should not see yourself as ‘dumb’ or ‘inadequate’ even if you do not know more than your child.  Simply take the opportunity to gain an education along with your children as a co-learner. See learning as an adventure that you are sharing together. Act like detectives and ‘find out’ how to spell unfamiliar words. Don’t be afraid to say: “Well, I am not sure about that one, so let’s look it up.’  (It is very helpful to have a good dictionary, a grammar reference book and a set of encyclopaedias in the home).  
  
A low-cost book for learning how to teach children to read and write using things that you have around the home, is 'The Three Rs Kit' by Dr Ruth Beechick (for Years K-3).