

AN INTRODUCTION TO  
Classical Homeschooling

BY DIANE SPEED  
of the Classical Kids Network  
*[www.classickids.net](http://www.classickids.net)*

# THE CLASSICAL APPROACH

## to Homeschooling

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Based on *The Well Trained Mind*

### Core principles

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- Set up solid foundations.
- Promote:
  - 1) learning how to learn;
  - 2) mental discipline;
  - 3) intellectual curiosity.
- Instill a willingness to grapple with the lessons of the past.

### Key priorities

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- reading
- writing
- math
- history

THE CLASSICAL APPROACH

# THE TRIVIUM

## RHETORIC

*Training in writing & speaking* — Grades 9 - 12

- Synthesis of knowledge & logical argument
- A focus on great books

## LOGIC

*Training in critical thinking* — Grades 5 - 8

- Exploring the reasons behind the facts
- Weighing evidence

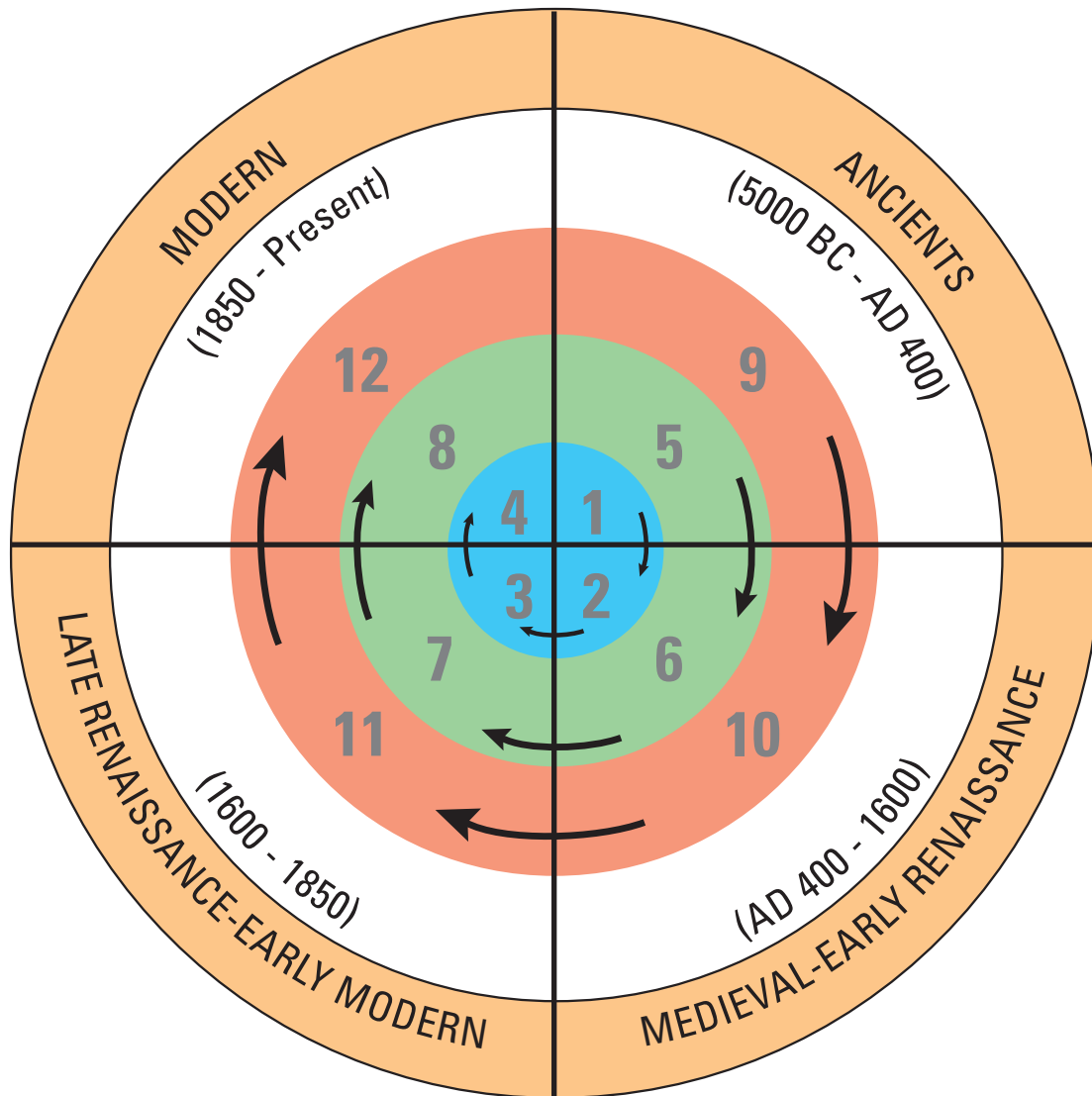
## GRAMMAR

*Building the foundation* — Grades 1 - 4

- Acquisition of knowledge, frames of reference
- Memorization of facts

## THE CLASSICAL APPROACH

# HISTORY



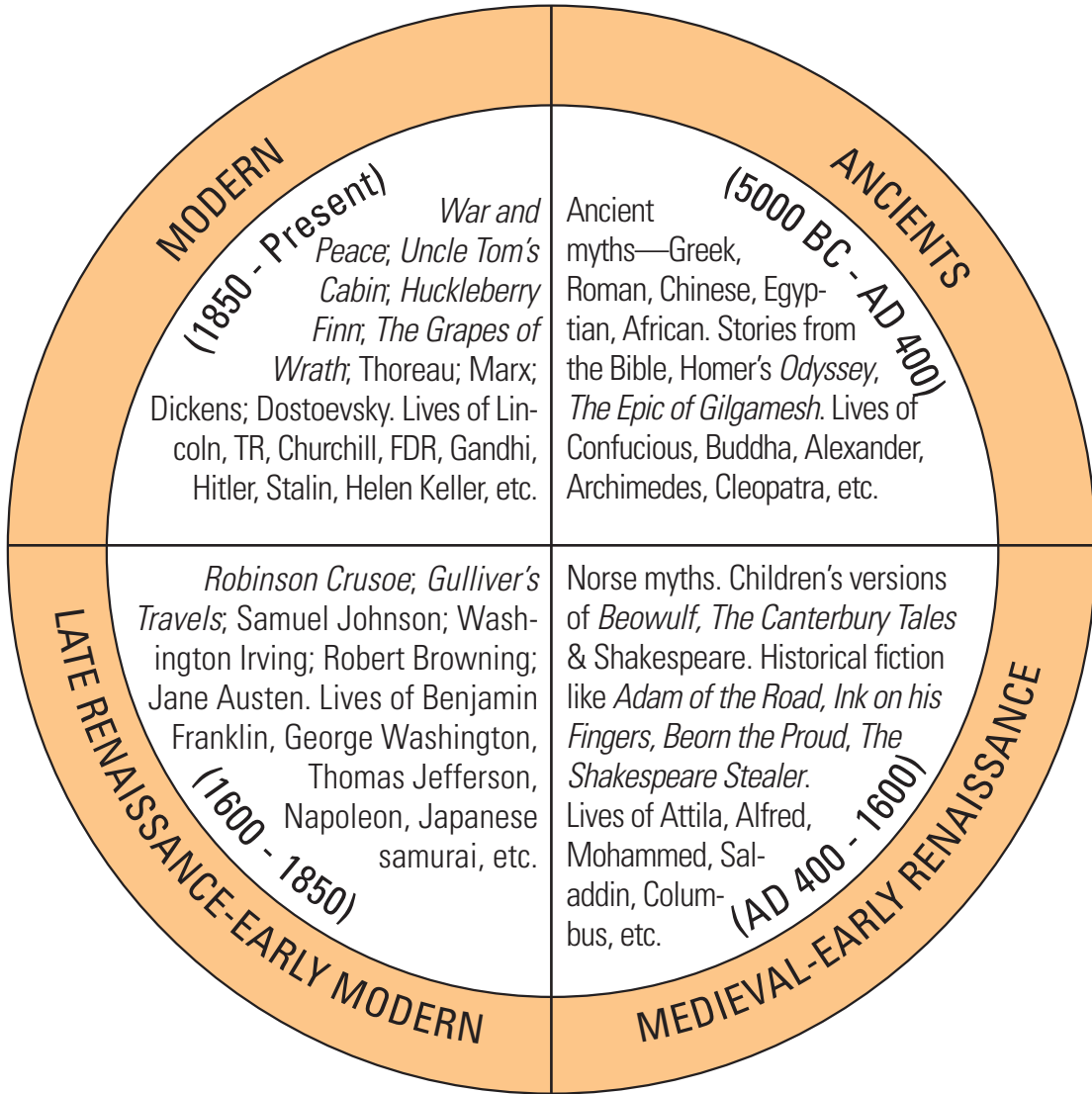
IN THE COURSE OF TWELVE YEARS, the child encounters each time period—and the major literature of that period—three discrete times, each time going into more depth.

In this diagram, the concentric rings represent (starting with the center and moving out):

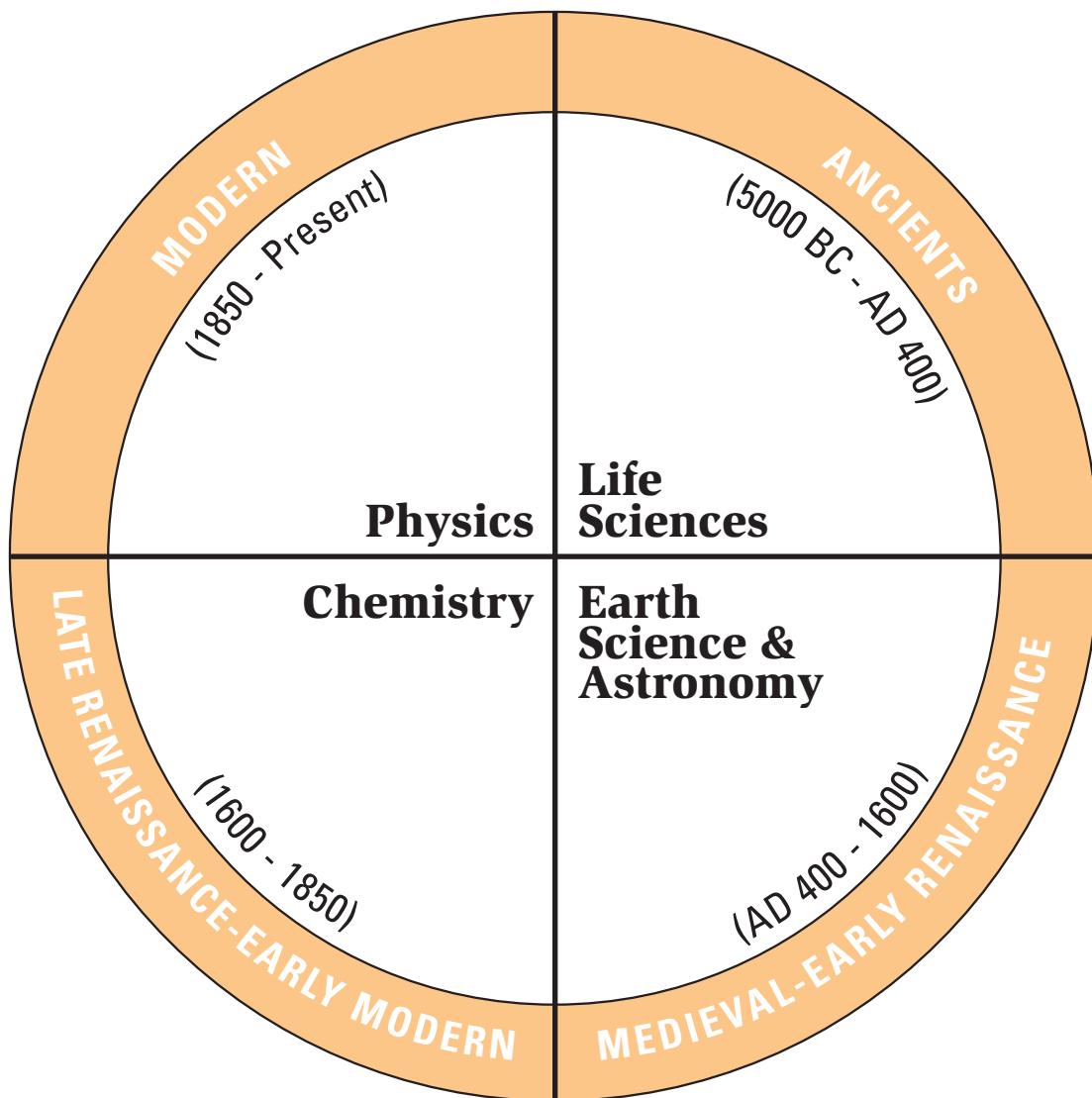
- The **Grammar** Stage (grades 1-4);
- The **Logic** Stage (grades 5-8);
- The **Rhetoric** Stage (grades 9-12).

# THE CLASSICAL APPROACH

# LITERATURE



## THE CLASSICAL APPROACH

**SCIENCE**

# THE CLASSICAL APPROACH

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## Starting in the middle?

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### **BASIC APPROACH**

- Assess your child.
- Lay a proper foundation.
- Make goals for your child for the year.

### **OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES**

- **Below-grade reading or math.** If you are starting in the middle with a classical curriculum and your child has below-grade reading skills, a great deal of your time will be spent on reading—likewise if the child is struggling with math. Shoring up those foundations will be your main objective for the first year; you'll spend far less time on science or art or a foreign language.

Remember: the priorities in classical education are reading & writing, math, and history.

- **Shifting gears.** If you are changing your approach in the middle of a school year—or if you're just making major changes in your approach—fold in one new subject at a time. Begin with history.

## Starting with several children?

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- You can have two children a few years apart studying the same history and science, reading the same literature.
- Cover the same literature, only at different reading levels. Or have the older child read to the younger child.
- It's okay if a child covers the four stages of history only two or two and a half times, instead of three full times. They'll still get it.

## THE CLASSICAL APPROACH

# Sample of a Weekly Schedule

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Exercise w/Dad	Exercise w/Dad	Exercise w/Dad	Exercise w/Dad	Exercise w/Dad	Exercise w/Dad	Church
<u>Math</u> : ½ Sheet	<u>Math</u> : ½ Sheet	<u>Math</u> : ½ Sheet	<u>Math</u> : ½ Sheet	<u>Math</u> : ½ Sheet		
<u>Guitar</u> Practice New Song + 3 songs	<u>Gymnastics</u>	<u>Guitar</u> Practice New Song + 2 songs	<u>Art Class</u>	<u>Guitar</u> Practice New Song + 3 songs	<u>Guitar</u> Practice New Song + 2 songs	<u>Guitar</u> Practice New Song + 2 songs
<u>Spelling</u> : 1 sheet	<u>Spelling</u> : 1 sheet	<u>Spelling</u> : 1 sheet	<u>Spelling</u> : 1 sheet	<u>Spelling</u> : 1 sheet		
<u>Music Theory</u> : 1 line	<u>Music Theory</u> : 1 line	<u>Music Theory</u> : 1 line	<u>Music Theory</u> : 1 line	<u>Music Theory</u> : 1 line		
<u>Science</u> Reading or Experiment	<u>Grammar</u> See Mom	<u>Handwriting</u> ½ Page	<u>Grammar</u> See Mom	<u>Grammar</u> See Mom		
<u>History</u> Reading or Narration	<u>French</u> Review vocabulary with Mom or Dad	<u>French</u> Review vocabulary with Mom or Dad	<u>History</u> Reading or Narration	<u>History</u> Reading or Narration		
<u>Handwriting</u> ½ Page	<u>Handwriting</u> ½ Page	<u>French Class</u>	<u>Handwriting</u> ½ Page	<u>Handwriting</u> ½ Page		
<u>French</u> Review vocabulary with Mom or Dad	<u>Guitar</u> Practice New Song + 3 songs	<u>Guitar Lesson</u>	<u>French</u> Review vocabulary with Mom or Dad	<u>French</u> Review vocabulary with Mom or Dad		
<u>Memory Work</u>	<u>Memory Work</u>	<u>Memory Work</u>	<u>Memory Work</u>	<u>Memory Work</u>		
Reading/Free time (2 Hours)	Reading/Free time (2 Hours)	<u>Group Guitar</u> : Class 1 <u>Group Guitar</u> : Class 2	<u>Guitar</u> Practice New Song + 3 songs	<u>Science</u> Reading or Experiment or <u>Music Theory</u> <u>Class</u>		

### About Diane Speed

IN 2002 DIANE SPEED founded Classical Kids, a home-school support group dedicated to classical education. The group began with just five families and now lists over 150 in its membership, most residing on the western side of Connecticut, in Fairfield County, but with a new (and growing) branch based in Mystic.

Classical Kids conducts a monthly kids' forum in

which children present their own work. The group also gets together for community service projects, adult education seminars, cooperative education opportunities, and fun and games.

Diane lives in Bethel, CT, with her husband and two children. For more information about Classical Kids, go to [www.classicalkids.net](http://www.classicalkids.net).