

AN INTRODUCTION TO
Classical Homeschooling

BY DIANE SPEED
of the Classical Kids Network
www.classickids.net

THE CLASSICAL APPROACH to Homeschooling

Based on *The Well Trained Mind*

Core principles

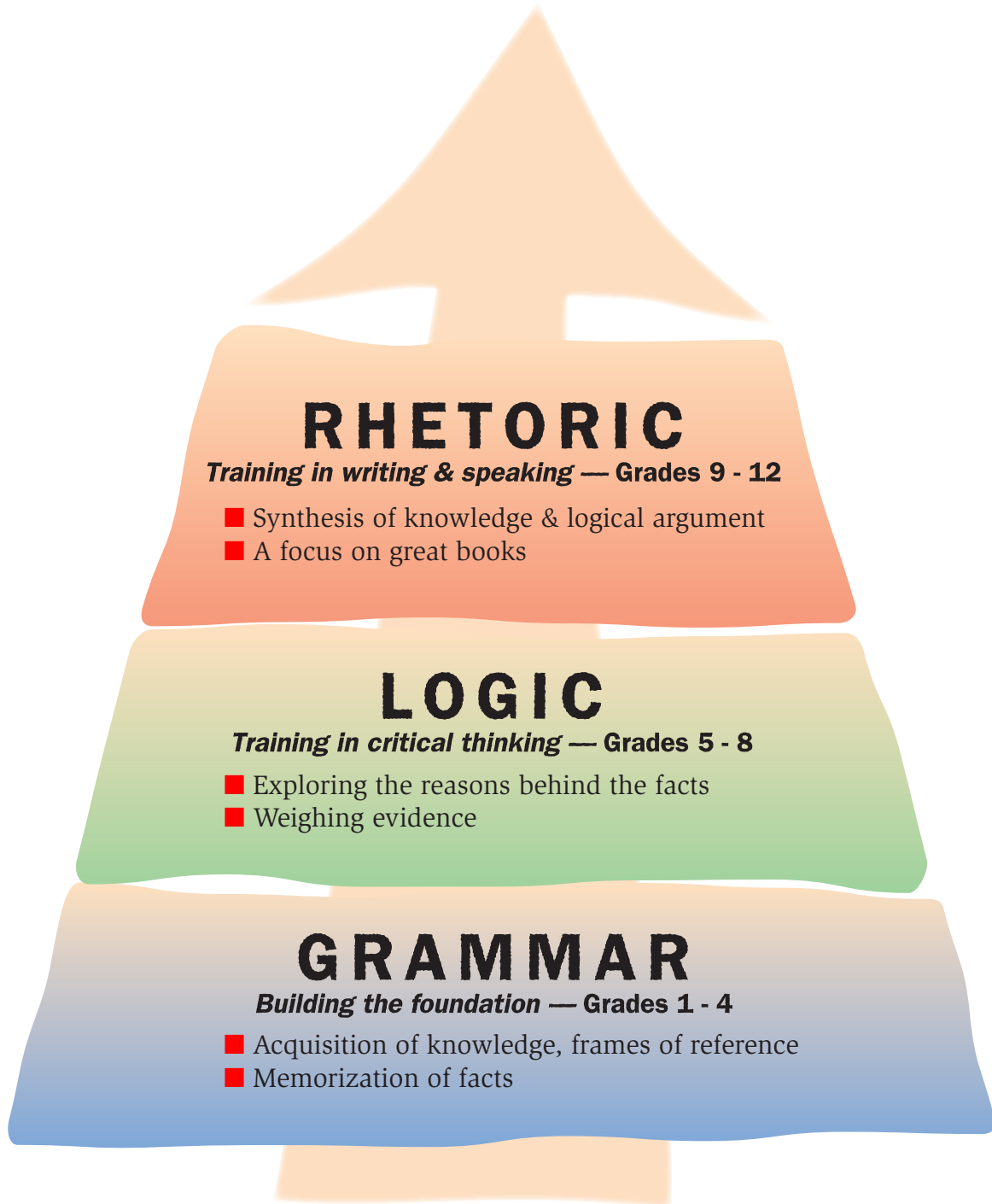
- Set up solid foundations.
- Promote:
 - 1) learning how to learn;
 - 2) mental discipline;
 - 3) intellectual curiosity.
- Instill a willingness to grapple with the lessons of the past.

Key priorities

- reading
- writing
- math
- history

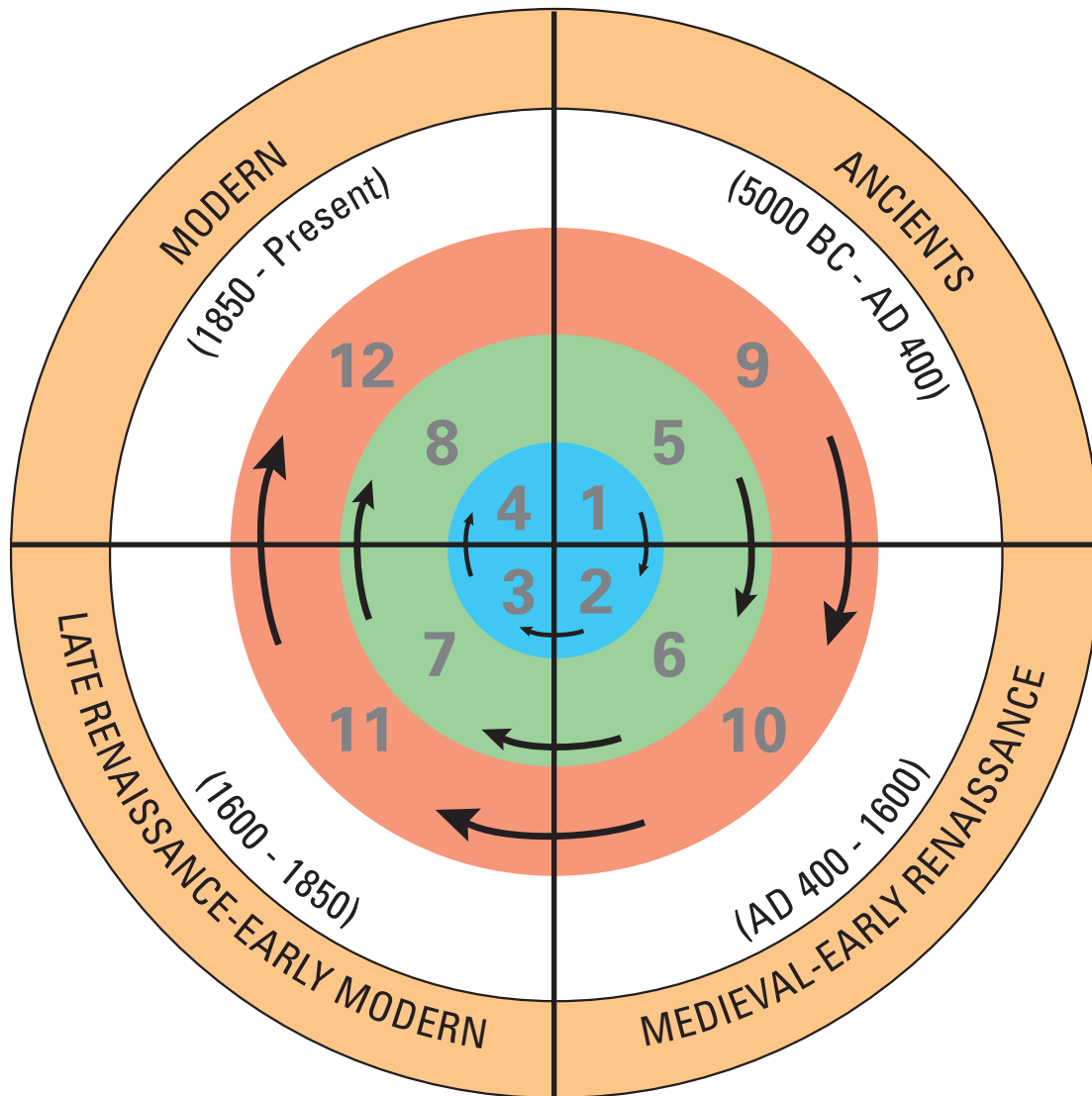
THE CLASSICAL APPROACH

THE TRIVIUM



THE CLASSICAL APPROACH

HISTORY



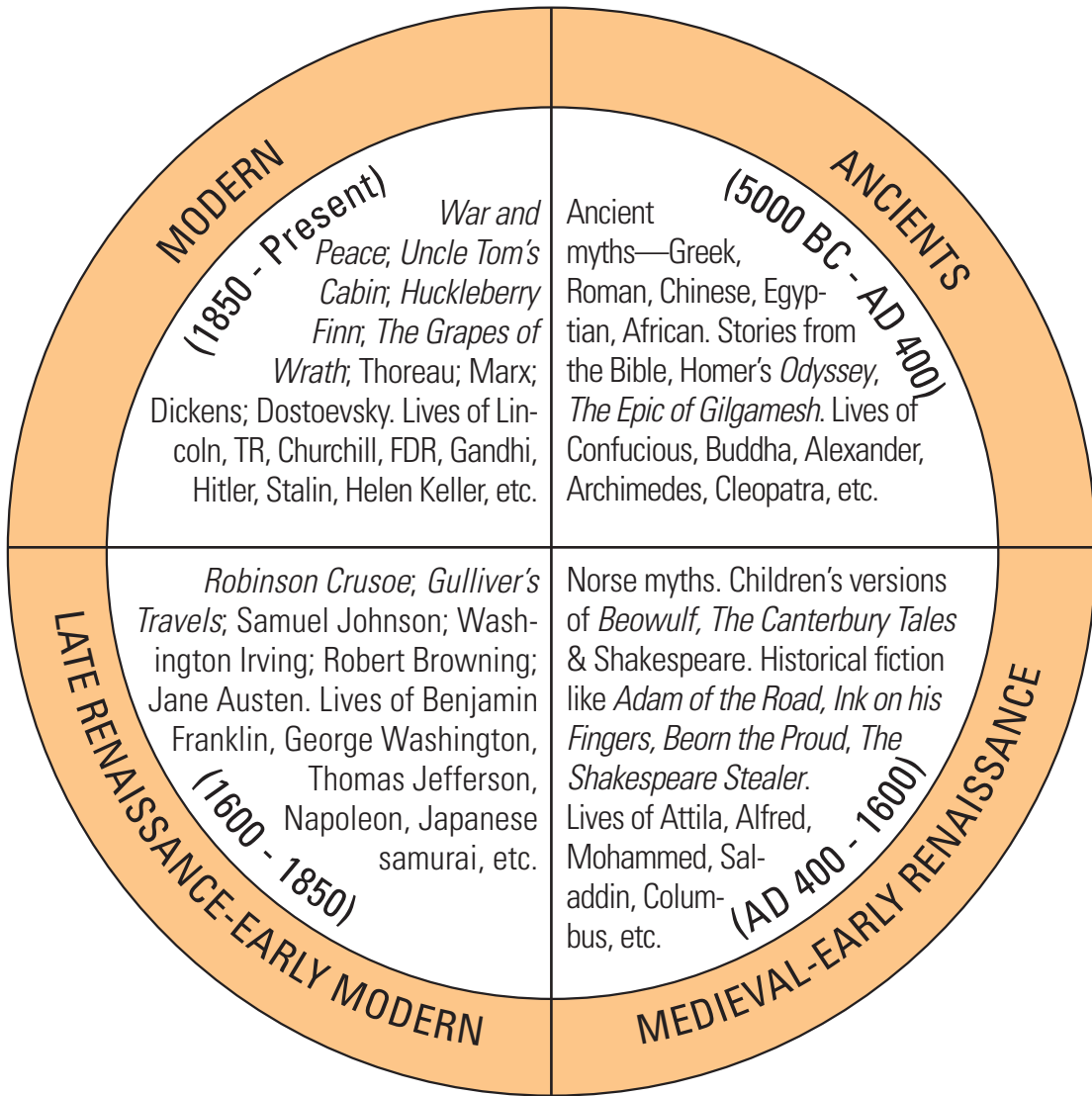
IN THE COURSE OF TWELVE YEARS, the child encounters each time period—and the major literature of that period—three discrete times, each time going into more depth.

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

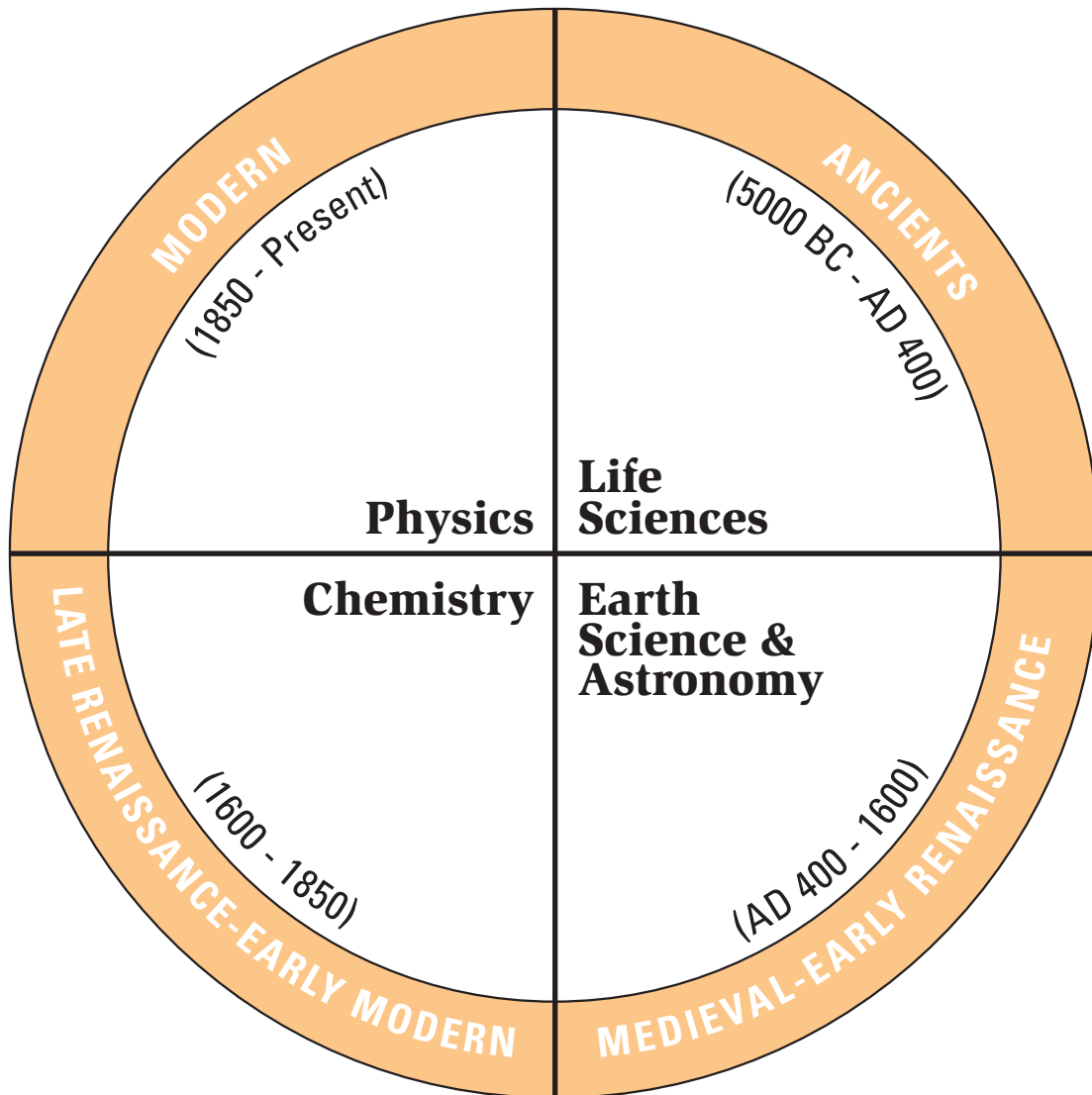
- The **Grammar** Stage (grades 1-4);
- The **Logic** Stage (grades 5-8);
- The **Rhetoric** Stage (grades 9-12).

THE CLASSICAL APPROACH

LITERATURE



THE CLASSICAL APPROACH

SCIENCE

THE CLASSICAL APPROACH

Starting in the middle?

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?

- 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 |
| Math: ½ Sheet | Math: ½ Sheet | Math: ½ Sheet | Math: ½ Sheet | Math: ½ Sheet | | |
| Guitar Practice New Song + 3 songs | Gymnastics | Guitar Practice New Song + 2 songs | Art Class | Guitar Practice New Song + 3 songs | Guitar Practice New Song + 2 songs | Guitar Practice New Song + 2 songs |
| Spelling: 1 sheet | Spelling: 1 sheet | Spelling: 1 sheet | Spelling: 1 sheet | Spelling: 1 sheet | | |
| Music Theory: 1 line | Music Theory: 1 line | Music Theory: 1 line | Music Theory: 1 line | Music Theory: 1 line | | |
| Science Reading or Experiment | Grammar See Mom | Handwriting ½ Page | Grammar See Mom | Grammar See Mom | | |
| History Reading or Narration | French Review vocabulary with Mom or Dad | French Review vocabulary with Mom or Dad | History Reading or Narration | History Reading or Narration | | |
| Handwriting ½ Page | Handwriting ½ Page | French Class | Handwriting ½ Page | Handwriting ½ Page | | |
| French Review vocabulary with Mom or Dad | Guitar Practice New Song + 3 songs | Guitar Lesson | French Review vocabulary with Mom or Dad | French Review vocabulary with Mom or Dad | | |
| Memory Work | Memory Work | Memory Work | Memory Work | Memory Work | | |
| Reading/Free time (2 Hours) | Reading/Free time (2 Hours) | Group Guitar: Class 1 Group Guitar: Class 2 | Guitar Practice New Song + 3 songs | Science Reading or Experiment or Music Theory Class | | |

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 175 in its membership, most residing on the western side of Connecticut, in Fairfield County. In addition, a satellite group meets monthly in the Mystic/Groton area.

Classical Kids conducts a monthly kids' forum in which

children present their own work. In addition, through its website—classicalkids.net—the group provides opportunities for group learning, home-educator enrichment, kids' social gatherings, and community service.

Diane lives in Bethel, CT, with her husband and two children. For more information about Classical Kids, go to www.classicalkids.net.