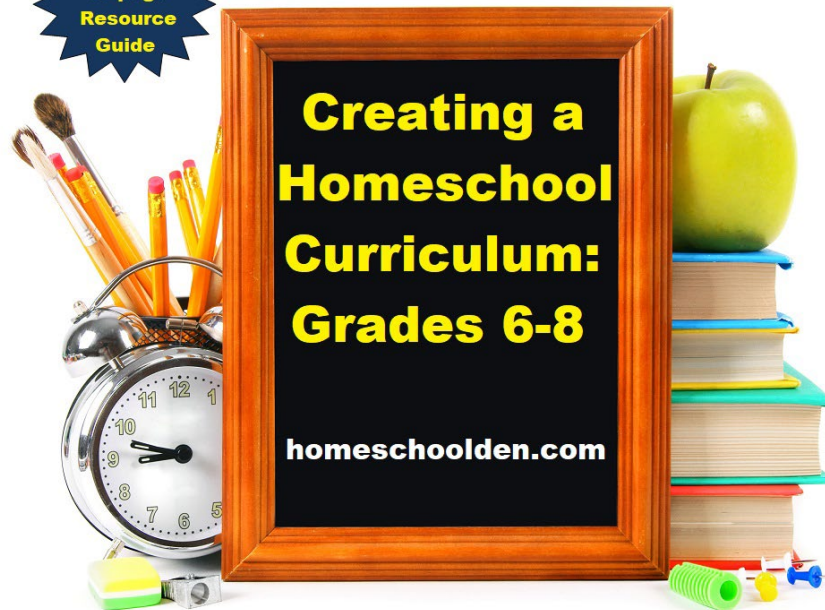


How to Create Your Own Homeschool Curriculum:

Grade 6 - 8 Resource Guide

FREE
30-page
Resource
Guide



What subjects should I teach my kid/s? Where do I start? How do I know what to teach my kids? What skills do they need as we look toward high school?

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Note: This file also has links to posts and packets at our blog, homeschoolden.com.

How do I get started homeschooling my middle schooler? How do I know what to teach my 6th, 7th or 8th grader?

This free 30+ page Homeschool Curriculum Resource Guide provides some insight into how our family is navigating the middle school years. There are some basic checklists in each of the subjects from language arts and math to science, history and foreign languages. This guide includes some of the specific topics our family may (hopefully!) cover as the kids move through the middle school years, though as the guide will tell you... all three of my kids will have a different experience coming up through these grades -- and yours will too!!

Why did I create this series, How to Create Your Own Homeschool Curriculum?

I first set out to create this Curriculum Resource Guide series because I had so many reader questions. Quite a number of people wanted to know what we did in 2nd grade, 4th grade or 7th grade. I found that a difficult question to answer because like many homeschool families we do many of our subjects together. But, the question is still legitimate, right? We are all curious about what other families are doing with kids about the same ages as theirs.

What I hope to do with this series is give you a framework of what we did. You can look at what we did and pick and choose what might work for your family. That's the wonderful thing about homeschooling, you create a curriculum path that works for you! Remember there are free resource guides like this one for

- [Kindergarten – First Grade](#)
- [Grades 2-3](#)
- [Grades 4-5](#)
- and now this curriculum guide for grades 6-8

How to Create Your Own Homeschool Curriculum: Gr. 6-8

This is the 4th in a series of curriculum resource guides I have created. This one has, by far, been the most challenging to put together. I think that's because my girls are still coming up through the middle school years. All three of my kids have had a different homeschool experience as they've come up through the grades. (Does that sound familiar?!)

I'm also worried that you are going to look everything on this list and faint! You might wonder how you'll possibly get through all of this. The thing is, many of these are topics we covered in earlier grades so our family just reviewed/hurried through the topics. Some topics we went into a *lot* of depth and other topics we scratched the surface, but then ran out of time.

So, just as each of my kids will all have completely different middle school experiences, know that your kids and your family will also pick and choose along the way. Some topics might excite your kids, other topics you glance off the surface, and still other topics they won't cover until high school or college... or not at all.

You might cover given topics/subjects for a variety of reasons....

Your family might study a topic because your kids are fascinated or interested in a topic.

Your family might study a topic because *you* are fascinated. (We've all had instructors who ooze enthusiasm and excitement for a topic we never knew could be so interesting!)

Some topics are a means to polishing other skills... writing essays or doing research.

Some topics (like cells or geography) might serve as the foundations and bricks for other topics. For example, a knowledge of cell function and organelles helps in the study of the digestive system or the understanding taxonomy. And a knowledge of geography is imperative as you study the tensions and

transitions of modern Europe from 1900 (the period of nationalism) through the end of WWII. These topics help, but that doesn't mean students can't pick up what they need to know later. 😊

And often (for my kids at least) we study a topic simply because they don't know much about it.

You will never cover everything!

Again, when you look through these suggestions, see them as a smorgasbord... Pick and choose. You might come back and look at topics again in more depth later. Or, you might skip some topics altogether.

No teacher in any classroom can cover everything (take that from a high school and college history teacher!! We educators *always* skim over some areas and spend more time on others.)

My kids each will have had a completely different experience coming up through the middle school years. None of them will have gone through everything. My main goal is that we dive and explore different topics and they are inspired and excited by what they've learned. And, that they build skills and continue to be excited about learning!

This year my kids are ages 10, 12 and 14. But people continue to ask for this guide, so as long as you realize this is a work in progress I'm happy to share my thoughts! By the time my youngest (now in 4th grade) finish middle school, I'm sure I'll have a whole lot more thoughts and wisdom to add to this guide! Keeping that in mind, you can use this as a starting point!

How should I cover this material?

This is a tough question, partly because there are now SO many options!

- You can go with an online curriculum program.
- You can go with complete curriculum for all subject areas (There are too many to list here, but Sonlight, Abeka, BJU, Time for Learning, are just a few...).
- You can purchase individual curriculums in the different subject areas (for example, getting Cover Story for writing or Saxon for math).
- You can do a combination of purchased curriculum and your own unit studies.
- You can purchase (traditional) textbooks and supplement with other resources.
- You can develop your own curriculum journey by borrowing books from the library and purchasing used curriculum.
- You can have your kids take online classes (there are many quality teaching resources out there from coursera, to open courseware from universities such as MIT, there is Khan Academy and many, many other options.

You can do projects, lapbooks, or notebook pages. You can do experiments, crafts, posters, mini-research projects and all kinds of things to help your kids learn. You can read aloud non-fiction and fiction books. You can watch videos... by middle school our family incorporated a lot of documentaries and college lectures (from Coursera or other mooc courses). In the right context, (fictional) novels and movies can be very educational as well! You can go on field trips, to museums, and explore the online world. ... and much, much more!

My highest goals have been to make the learning creative and engaging for the kids. I want them to have the skills they need to write well (and creatively), to think critically, to be able to learn new things on their own, to be polite, kind people. I want them to value education and to see what it will do for them. I keep the end goals in mind... And that's *your* first step. Decide what skills you want the kids to have at the end of the year and at the end of this homeschool journey. Then slowly work towards those!

Unit Studies Science: We have continued to do unit studies through the middle school years. I have found that we have generally covered a unit on chemistry, the human body, physical science and biology each year through the middle school years. This year, for example (with DD in 7th grade) we did Earth Science again (supplementing with lectures from a coursera course called Planet Earth), scientific classification & taxonomy, the digestive system (and nutrition), a chemistry unit, and a quick botany unit.

Unit Studies History: We have kept moving progressively through time. We are probably going into more depth and detail than public schools tend to. This year, for example, we spent a lot of time studying Japan and the samurai period, the Age of Absolutism, enlightenment, scientific revolution, French Revolution and Napoleon. Public schools tend to race through much more material, but as homeschoolers, I feel like we have the time to really dive deep into the material.

What style is your family?

We are eclectic homeschoolers. We use many different types of curriculum... from online courses, purchased homeschool curriculum, traditional textbooks, library books, documentary, films, and great books. I often pull from at least a half-dozen resources when we are covering a unit... plus I make a lot of our material to make sure the kids are learning on a deeper level.

At this point, the kids also do a lot of their own learning and then share what they've learned with the rest of us. They do power point presentations fairly regularly and share what they've discovered. My middle daughter said that she **loves** this type of learning and honestly says that she learns the most when she is doing the research & presentation!

Do I have to complete the entire curriculum/textbook/program?

Keep in mind that you will not and do not have to cover “everything.” If you purchase a homeschool curriculum (or any of our packets), you do not have to cover every page. If you look at a checklist of curriculum options... you do not have to cover everything. Use those as a resource, not as to-do list (or a ball-and-chain)!!

All that was kind of a disclaimer. I want to offer you a starting point (if it helps), but want you to know the YOU can and will create an amazing homeschool experience!! You CAN do this!! You know your kids better than anyone else!!

So, let's jump into the meat of things – building a curriculum for Grades 6 to 8. 😊 ~Liesl

Building Powerful Reasons for Homeschooling!

You know you had amazing reasons for beginning your homeschool journey, but have you continued to nurture you and your kids' homeschool dreams? Do you have powerful reasons for homeschooling that keep you motivated all throughout the year? Do you have the energy and inspiration you need to plan lessons and make the kids' learning experience incredible, memorable, fulfilling and powerful?

Why do you homeschool? List your reasons below:

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Now that you have thought about why you are homeschooling in a general way, think about the subjects and/or topics your kids are learning.

Why are they studying these subjects/topics?

Subject/Topic: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____	Subject/Topic: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____
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As you look closely at what your kids are learning and why, you'll probably come up with even more reasons why homeschooling works for your family!

When you look at what you want to accomplish for each subject/topic, you start looking at the specific skills you want your kids to build.

For example, you might be studying history not only to discover how different countries interact with one another over time, to see the role religion has played in uniting or breaking regions apart or how human ingenuity has improved (or destroyed) lives, but also you might emphasize building skills in writing, research, using power point, presenting information orally and things like that.

And as you look more closely at your homeschool and how it functions, some of your reasons for homeschooling might be even more apparent!

Grade 6 - 8

Language Arts	Math	Social Studies	Science	Arts, Music, Foreign Language
<p>Great Literature Novels</p> <p>Literature Selections (poetry, short stories, plays, etc.) We used literature anthologies.</p> <p>Writing Workshop</p> <p>Essay & Research Writing</p> <p>Grammar & Editing Skills</p>	<p>Fractions, Percentages, Decimals, Factoring</p> <p>Pre - Algebra</p> <p>Algebra</p> <p>Geometry</p> <p>Building Skills in Middle School:</p> <p>Make sure kids know how to factor numbers easily. They will need this for Algebra!</p> <p>We have to do end-of-year tests to fulfil the homeschool requirements of our state. We found that we needed to review some math topics at the end of the year:</p> <p>Mean, Median, Mode</p> <p>Stem-and-leaf plots; Whisker plots, etc.</p>	<p>Ancients (if not previously covered)</p> <p>World History: China, India, Africa (if not previously covered)</p> <p>Middle Ages</p> <p>Renaissance Reformation</p> <p>Age of Absolutism</p> <p>Enlightenment</p> <p>Scientific Revolution</p> <p>Revolutions - American Revolution; French Revolution</p> <p>20th Century History Isms: Nationalism, Industrialization, WWI, Great Depression, WWII, 1950s, Cold War, Civil Rights Movement, etc.</p> <p>American History Some families do a year on this.</p>	<p>Physical Science</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Astronomy *Earth's Systems *Atmosphere, Weather and Climate *Geosphere: Earth's changing surface - plate movements, faults, earthquakes, volcanoes *Rocks & Minerals, Natural resources *Hydrosphere - Oceans <p>Physics & STEM</p> <p>Energy Unit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newton's Laws Motion & Stability Forces Optics Waves & their applications Sound Light <p>Astronomy</p> <p>Biology/Life Science</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Biosphere - Ecology Biomes, Food Chains & Webs *Classifying Organisms, Dissection *Genetics Heredity, inheritance & Variation of traits *Adaptations *Animal & Plant Cells *Cells, Tissues, Organs, Systems *Anatomy & Physiology - Human Body Systems *Botany 	<p>Music and Music Theory - My kids were taking private lessons and we've been involved in a homeschool band and wind ensemble.</p> <p>Art We touched on art history in our history studies, but we haven't had any formal art instruction.</p> <p>Foreign Language: In Europe, most kids start to learn a foreign language early. We decided to do that in our homeschool as well. We are learning German (because that's what I learned). Introduce basic vocabulary such as: numbers, greetings, colors, animals, words in a house, family words, words in a school room, etc.</p>

<p>Building Skills in Middle School:</p> <p>Essay writing</p> <p>Editing your own work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • commas • quotation marks • indenting 		<p>Civics and Government</p> <p>3 branches of government. Types of Governments Types of Societies World Leaders</p> <p>Building Skills in Middle School:</p> <p>Essay writing.</p> <p>Research, writing & presentation. (I have had my kids do quite a number of power point presentations... adding in a new skill requirement with successive assignment (like animation)</p> <p>Begin to see long-term trends and patterns in history.</p> <p>Begin to understand historical cause and effect.</p> <p>Begin to use primary and secondary sources, including graphs, maps, and images.</p> <p>Have a strong knowledge of how our own government works</p> <p>Continue building a strong knowledge of geography</p>	<p>Chemistry</p> <p>Periodic Table, Atoms & Molecules, Elements, Classifying Matter - Metals/Nonmetals, Mixtures & Substances, Bohr Diagrams, Electron configuration, Lewis Structures, Covalent & Ionic Bonds, Making Molecules, States of Matter Properties of Matter</p> <p>Building Skills in Middle School:</p> <p>Have lots of hands-on experiences & do experiments that allow students to make predictions.</p> <p>Have familiarity with basic science terminology in each of the major science subjects.</p>	<p>Building Skills in Middle School:</p> <p>Build strengths in their areas of interest and passion.</p> <p>Learn to practice regularly – daily if possible!</p>
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Middle School Science

(Grades 6-8)

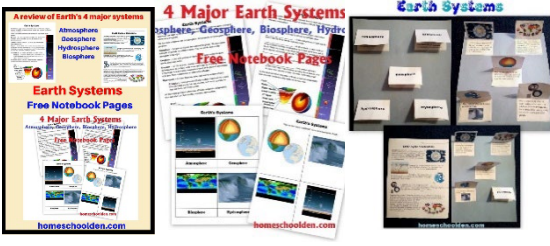






We would spend 2-4 weeks on units that touched on



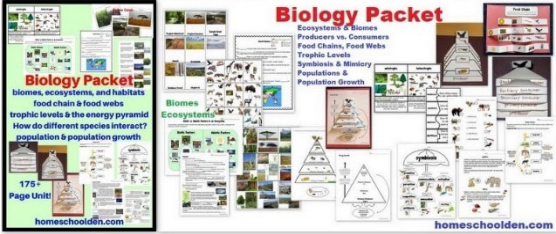



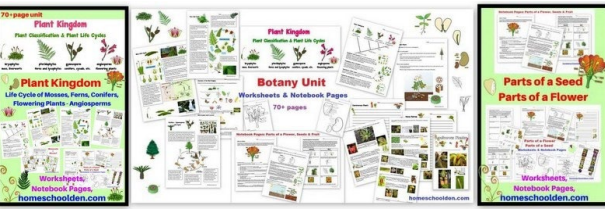
- Earth and Physical Science
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Human Body Systems

On some of the more complex/complicated units we reviewed them a bit each year. For example, we reviewed the basics of energy (kinetic vs potential energy, hydrocarbons-this is important for organic chemistry in high school biology and chemistry) cells, scientific classification, the periodic table, ions & isotopes most every year.

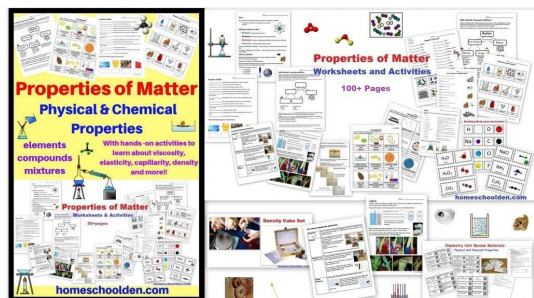
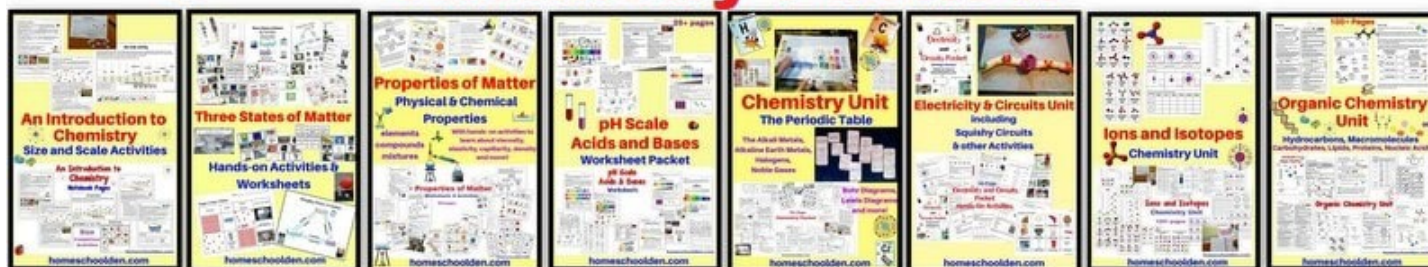
Middle School (Grades 6-8): Science

Earth and Physical Science

	<p>Earth Systems: The Earth works as a set of interconnected systems; these four major Earth Systems are often referred to as spheres and include the 1) atmosphere 2) geosphere 3) hydrosphere – cryosphere 4) biosphere</p> <p>By subdividing Earth's systems into subcategories scientists are more easily able to study and understand the planet's natural cycles and processes.</p>
	<p>Earth Systems: Atmosphere</p> <p>The Layers of the Atmosphere is a topic your kids may have covered in late elementary, but its Earth Science – the geosphere – Earth's changing surface, plate movements, faults, earthquakes, volcanoes</p>
	<p>Weather and Climate</p> <p>Types of Clouds, Weather Map Symbols, High & Low Pressure Systems, Global Winds, the Jet Stream, Local Winds, Monsoons, el Niño and la Niña conditions, Air masses (and how they are named), and Cold fronts, warm fronts, occluded fronts</p>
	<p>Earth Science: the geosphere – Earth's changing surface, the layers of the earth, Earth's mantle, plate movements, tectonic plates, faults, earthquakes, volcanoes</p>
	<p>Rocks and Minerals</p> <p>This packet covers minerals, identifying minerals - crystalline structures, the characteristics of minerals (color, streak, luster, hardness), the Mohs Hardness Scale, how rocks are formed, weathering, erosion, the lithification process and more. It also includes interactive minerals observation lab activity.</p>
	<p>Energy Unit We started covering Energy topics (physics topics) in middle school so we did parts of these units each year in middle school. We covered Kinetic vs Potential Energy, Renewable vs Non-renewable Energy, fossil fuels-hydrocarbons the Carbon Cycle. We covered the types of energy (mechanical, chemical, nuclear, electrical, radiant, sound, elastic, and gravitational energy); waves, the electromagnetic spectrum and light; Converting energy from one form to another</p>
	<p>Astronomy - Space Race We covered the universe and galaxies & light time and the space program. While doing this unit we watched a documentary called <i>Chasing the Moon</i>, about the space race and the Mercury, Gemini and Apollo space programs.</p>

 <p>Earth's Systems Free Notebook Pages homeschoolden.com</p> <p>4 Major Earth Systems Atmosphere, Geosphere, Biosphere, Hydrosphere Free Notebook Pages homeschoolden.com</p>	<p>Earth Systems The Earth has 4 interconnected systems. The previous page touched on Earth Science and the atmosphere. The hydrosphere (Earth's waters- the study of oceans/oceanography) and biosphere (life on earth) are often studied during biology.</p>
 <p>Ocean Unit 100+ Pages homeschoolden.com</p> <p>Ocean Unit homeschoolden.com</p>	<p>Ocean Unit</p> <p>The Study of Oceans/Oceanography: Marine Habitats, Coral Reefs, Water Form Words, Tides, Currents, Ocean Floor, Ocean Life, Salinity, Layers of the Ocean, Bioluminescence and More!</p>
 <p>Biology Packet Ecosystems, and habitats food chain & food webs trophic levels & the energy pyramid How do different species interact? population & population growth 175+ Page Unit! homeschoolden.com</p> <p>Biology Packet homeschoolden.com</p>	<p>Biology Packet - Ecosystems and Biomes; Producers vs consumers; habitats; biological interactions; feeding relationships - food chain and food webs; trophic levels; symbiosis and mimicry; populations and population growth</p>
 <p>Scientific Classification & Taxonomy Unit homeschoolden.com</p> <p>Scientific Classification & Taxonomy Unit homeschoolden.com</p>	<p>Scientific Classification and Taxonomy Packet (100 pages) dichotomous key activity, Linnaeus & the history of classification, learn the Animalia phyla (Annelids, Platyhelminthes, Nematodes, Cnidaria, Animalia, etc.)</p>
 <p>Cell Unit 100+ Page Packet homeschoolden.com</p> <p>Cell Unit homeschoolden.com</p>	<p>Cells Unit (150+ pages) – cell theory, prokaryotic vs. eukaryotic cells, animal vs. plant cells, organelles of the cell, chloroplast anatomy, the layers of a leaf, photosynthesis and more.</p>
 <p>Pathogens Packet 100 pages homeschoolden.com</p> <p>Pathogens Packet homeschoolden.com</p>	<p>Pathogens Packet (100 pages)– This unit covers the six major living and nonliving pathogens: bacteria, protozoa, fungi and parasites/worms as well as viruses and prions. The large majority of this packet goes into detail about bacteria and viruses. **This was my daughter's favorite unit in 8th grade!</p>
 <p>Plant Kingdom 70+ pages homeschoolden.com</p> <p>Botany Unit 70+ pages homeschoolden.com</p> <p>Parts of a Seed Parts of a Flower homeschoolden.com</p>	<p>Botany Packet – (80 pages) Plant Classification, Life Cycle of the Moss, Fern, Conifer, Angiosperms, Parts of a Flower, Parts of a Seed, Seed & Fruit Development, Monocots vs Dicots – plus Carnivorous Plants Mini-Unit</p>

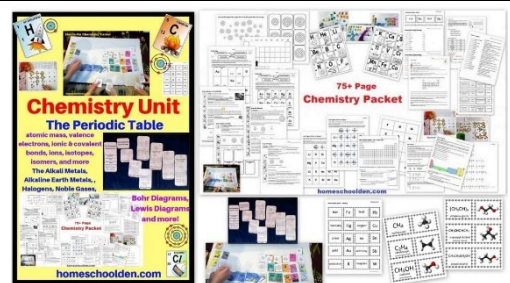
Chemistry Packets



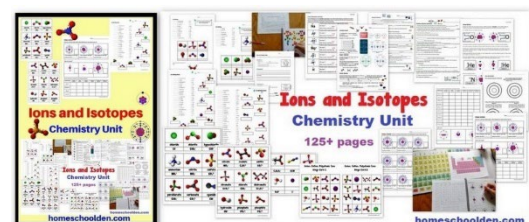
We covered the States of Matter in elementary. You might want to review that, if you haven't already. In middle school one of our first units (after doing the Size of Atoms activity -intro to chemistry) was the **Properties of Matter** with topics such as Atoms; Elements & Compounds; Molecular vs. structural formulas; Physical and Chemical Properties; Basic definitions (of terms such as viscosity, elasticity, capillarity, ductility, malleability, etc.); Hands-On Activities of some of these properties (viscosity, cohesion, capillary action, etc.); Density Activities; Mixtures: Solutions, Colloids and Suspensions; Separating Mixtures; Building Molecules Activities (and activity cards)



Electricity and Circuits Unit – We did this unit after we covered the Properties of Matter. This is a really fun, hands-on unit. Topics in this unit included The parts of an atom; Electric currents; Conductors and insulators; Parts of a light bulb; Batteries; Volts, amps, ohms; Electrical circuits: Power source, load, conductor; Simple Circuits; Direct and Alternating Current (DC and AC); Resistance, Resistors and How they work; Anode, cathode; Electrical Symbols; Open and closed circuits; Short circuits; How to draw basic electrical schematics; Series circuits; Parallel circuits; Motors; Circuit breakers and the power grid



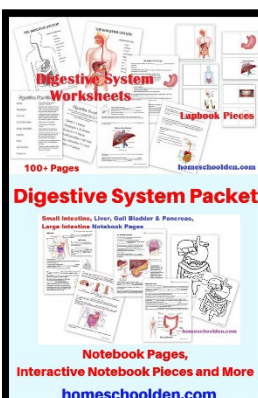
Chemistry Packet – An introduction to the Periodic Table (150 pages) – Learn how the periodic table is organized and find out more about the different groups of the periodic table (Alkali metals, alkaline earth metals, halogens). Learn what valence electrons are and do some fun activities to create Lewis structures. Learn about the first twenty elements as well as elements with unusual names. Plus, learn about electron configuration and more! (We did this primarily in middle school, but did electron configuration in high school again.)



Ions and Isotopes – After finishing the chemistry unit, I wanted to be sure my kids really understood the difference between ions (which have more/fewer electrons) and isotopes (which has more/fewer neutrons). This unit helped cement that in. I also wanted my kids to have a leg up for high school chemistry by starting to become familiar with important ions – so we played a lot of identification games for common ions such as chloride, chlorate, etc. etc.

Human Body System

We continued our routine of covering one or two human body systems each year. We covered most of these units at least once when my kids were in elementary, but went into more depth in middle school.

 <p>Human Body Systems</p> <p>How the body is organized: from specialized cells to tissues... organs to body systems</p> <p>homeschoolden.com</p>	<h3>Human Body Systems</h3> <p>What are the major human body Systems? How do they work (in general) from cells, tissues, organs to body systems?</p>	 <p>Circulatory System</p> <p>Worksheets, Hands-on Activities and More! 40+ Page Unit</p> <p>homeschoolden.com</p>	<h3>Circulatory System</h3>
 <p>Skeletal System</p> <p>Worksheets, Hands-on Activities and More! 90+ Page Unit</p> <p>homeschoolden.com</p>	<h3>Skeletal System</h3>	 <p>Endocrine System</p> <p>Packet 60+ Page Unit</p> <p>homeschoolden.com</p>	<h3>Endocrine System</h3>
 <p>Muscular System</p> <p>50-page unit</p> <p>homeschoolden.com</p>	<h3>Muscular System</h3>	 <p>Nervous System</p> <p>Packet</p> <p>homeschoolden.com</p>	<h3>Nervous System</h3>
 <p>Digestive System</p> <p>100+ Pages</p> <p>Digestive System Packet</p> <p>Notebook Pages, Interactive Notebook Pieces and More</p> <p>homeschoolden.com</p>	<h3>Digestive System</h3> <p>In middle school we went on to talk about nutrition: vitamins, fiber, enzymes, etc.</p>		

Middle School (Grades 6-8): History

Please download the [Free History Checklist](https://homeschoolden.com/history-units/) that I made recently! You will find that here: <https://homeschoolden.com/history-units/>

History Checklist

History Checklist

World History Units

Ancient World
Ancient Egypt
Ancient China
Classical Greece
Classical Rome
Medieval Europe
Renaissance Europe
Enlightenment Europe
19th Century Europe
20th Century Europe
World War I
World War II
Cold War
Modern World

Created by Lisa, homeschoolden.com

Building Historical Skills

Look at symbols and landmarks from different cultures

Categorizing

Placing events in a larger historical context - via timelines, chronology

Understand different individuals' role in history

See different points of view

For Homeschoolers

History Activity Ideas

It is easy to incorporate creative lessons into history. In the early years, students can do art projects, lap books and interactive notebooks. They can do hands-on geography projects and posters. As kids get older, they can delve into history more, beginning to understand the complexity of certain issues and how issues and events grow from the past.

- Interactive Slides - Share the spotlight with pictures from the past
- Analyze Historical Images - paintings, photographs, maps, illustrations, etc.
- Use maps to show changing political boundaries
- Use political cartoons
- Create questions that lead to discovery - Have students progress from basic observations about an image to interpretation. Then go on to analyze images.
- Create opportunities for students to understand the deeper emotions and circumstances surrounding historical events.

Mini-dramas - Act out scenes. Have students take on the facial expressions someone from that era would have. Create a dramatic presentation that brings to life the experience of one social group.

Create historical simulations

Role play - have students take on famous historical figures. Have the meet, greet and discuss, issues staying in that role. (Then have them switch positions and take the other side of an issue)

Conduct fake interviews... have students play a role and interview them (news style). Ask probing questions.

Have the students play historical detective... Look for hidden meanings in paintings, cartoons, etc.

Bring in period music when students act out a particular scene (insert painting/photo).

Match a photo (painting, cartoon) with its descriptive paragraph.

Evaluate historical events - rate them as ethical/unethical... by standards of that day... by today's standards. Debate and discuss.

Look for bias and different perspectives on historical issues (for example, examine WWII posters from the Central Powers and Allied points of view)

Challenge stereotypes... Understand stereotypes from that period... and from today's lens.

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American History Units

Native Americans
Early Colonies
American Revolution
Westward Expansion - Ohio Valley Settlement (French and Indian War), Tecumseh, Trail of Tears, Lewis and Clark, Mountain Men, the West
Slavery, Plantation System
Civil War
Native Americans (1860s-1870s): Navajo, Plains Indian History: Cheyenne and Sioux Notebook Pages (Sand Creek, Wounded Knee, etc.)
Immigration
Industrialization, Big Business, Progressive Era
1920s
Civil Rights Movement
1950s - Cold War, 1940s, 1970s
Vietnam War

Unit Studies

Regions or Countries & General Topics

We did unit studies when the kids were in elementary. We studied ancient history in more depth when they were in middle school and high school.

China
India
Africa (West Africa, Animals of the Savannah)
Russia
Australia (Aboriginal Culture, Settlement of Australia, Animals of Australia)
Middle East
Middle School Literature can include books such as I am Malala: Shooting Kahul! (as in photographing)
High School Lit (for mature students) can include books such as The Hate U Give, A Thousand Splendid Suns or The Book of Khalid
Civics - Government (A study of the Constitution, Bill of Rights, How our government functions on a national, state and local level)
Types of Government
Economics
Modern Current Events
Modern Geography - We did this in conjunction with many of our units along the way

Modern Geography

U.S. States and Capitals - We covered the U.S. states and capitals when we did American History
Asia - We covered the countries of Asia when we studied China and Japan when we studied the Vietnam War and Current Events
Middle East - We covered the countries of the Middle East when we did Ancient History. We also did a (modern) literature unit (see above) as we studied this geography.
Africa - We covered the countries of Africa when we did the Age of Exploration and when we studied the trans-Atlantic slave trade.
Australia - We covered the states and territories of Australia when we did a unit study on Australia.
Europe - We covered the countries of Europe when we studied the Middle Ages, Renaissance and Reformation. We studied these again when we did WWII, WWII and the Cold War.

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your homeschool
history path

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Science

Here are some of the activities that we did, with clickable links to the posts.

Some of these topics we covered in earlier years and just quickly reviewed as we went into a similar/related topic.

Remember, I have three kids and we do some of our subjects together (science, history, foreign language), so some of these units we returned to every couple of years and added more depth to the unit the second (or third!) time around. (For example, we covered Earth Science when the kids were quite young, in mid-elementary school and again when they were 10, 12 and 14 when we went into considerably more depth -- looking into the composition on lava and how this influences the power and explosive force of volcanic eruptions. Similarly, we did a unit on ecology/biology when my son was in middle school... as the girls hit middle school, we will review this unit but then move on to heredity, inheritance, variation of traits & adaptations.

My goal is for the kids to have a pretty solid foundation in sciences as they move into high school, but they won't necessarily hit all the topics listed in the middle school years. (For example, my son really hasn't done genetics or botany.) I'm not worried, though, because they will go into more depth in their high school courses!

I found it more important to delve into our units in as much depth as suited their interests.

If I were a bran-new homeschooler trying to choose topics/units for my middle schooler, what would I choose? I would ask the kids if they had any particular interest... and would start with one of these... or I might do one of these units below (though I would do cells (#1) before biology/ecology/classification (#2).)

1. Cells – I would try to give the kids a good foundation on the organelles of the cells and the difference between plant & animal cells, eukaryotic & prokaryotic cells
2. Biology/ecology & the classification of organisms – We did these as two different units in different years because we watched the entire Planet Earth documentary series when we did biology/ecology/biomes/habitats. But, if I were a new homeschooler & my kids were keen, I would probably also go into taxonomy/classification of animals as well since it ties back to cells (eukaryotic & prokaryotic cells) and ties to the biomes and habitats.
3. Earth Science – This is a fun unit at any age. We went into depth when the kids were middle school age and supplemented our unit with the lectures wonderful coursera.org class from the Univ. of Illinois. Remember, those classes are free!
4. Chemistry – I would make sure the kids had a good understanding of the Periodic Table, atomic structure, valence electrons, groups – metals/non-metals/metalloids and so forth... If you have time, I would go into ions and isotopes and the formation of molecules. There are lots of wonderful chemistry experiments your family can do together!

Middle School Science Topics (Quick Overview)

Biology/Life Science:

- ☐ Cells — Plants vs. Animal Cells; eukaryotic vs. prokaryotic cells, human body cells — (We also did a study of leaves and talked about photosynthesis when we did this unit again.)
 - ☐ Ecology/Biology — the biosphere: biomes, habitats, food chains & the food web, trophic levels, the energy pyramid, biological relationships, feeding relationships — When we did this unit, we also watched the BBC documentary, Planet Earth with David Attenborough. The kids loved this series!
 - ☐ Scientific Classification & Taxonomy — Classifying Organisms, Dissection
- When my kids were younger, we studied some of the basic animal characteristics. In this unit, we went into depth about the differences between animal phyla (annelids/earthworms vs. platyhelminths/flatworms, for example!). Plus, in this unit we did some basic dissection (clams/oysters, crabs, fish)
- ☐ Oceans — ocean life, fish form & function; bioluminescence; marine habitats; Note: we studied this both from a biological perspective, but also as one of the 4 major Earth Systems... so we talked about marine habitats, the ocean floor, sonar, salinity, ocean tides, ocean currents and so forth.
 - ☐ Genetics — This is generally a unit in high school biology, but if you have advanced students, you might want to do a basic unit about DNA & genetics.
 - ☐ Botany — 4 Main Plant Groups: Flowering Plants, Mosses, Ferns, and Cone-bearing plants — Plant Life Cycle, parts of a flower, parts of a seed, etc.
 - ☐ Pathogens — the six major living and nonliving pathogens: bacteria, protozoa, fungi and parasites/worms as well as viruses and prions.

Anatomy & Physiology (note: we generally reviewed the cells/tissues/organs/systems each year and studied ONE of the human body systems in depth each year)

- ☐ Cells, tissue, organs, body systems
- ☐ Skeletal System — structure & function of the bones
- ☐ Muscular System
- ☐ Circulatory System
- ☐ Digestive System; Micro Flora;
- ☐ Nutrition & Health (fiber, vitamins — we did this after our study of the Digestive System)
- ☐ The Brain & the Nervous System
- ☐ Reproductive System
- ☐ Body Growth & Development

Chemistry:

- ☐ States of Matter (Make sure your kids know these and terms like deposition and sublimation, but I wouldn't do a whole unit on this.)

- ❑ Physical & Chemical Properties of Matter – Talk about Matter, pure substances vs. mixtures, elements, compounds, solutions and suspensions, talk about the physical properties of matter (viscosity, cohesion, capillary action, and density) and chemical properties of matter.
- ❑ Compounds & Chemical Change; chemical bonds (ionic & covalent bonds); Molecules; Building Molecules
- ❑ Periodic Table: Atoms – Atomic Structure; Bohr Model;
- ❑ Elements and the Periodic Table (classifying matter: metals & nonmetals, mixtures & pure substances); names of elements – chemical symbols; symbols & atomic structure; periodic patterns; chemical families

Physical Science

- ❑ Solar System; planetary orbits (elliptical orbits; Kepler's Laws of Planetary Motion; the Sun (energy, layers of the Sun, Sun's atmosphere, etc.) the Universe
- ❑ Earth Science – We did this unit when the kids were younger, but then we came back and covered these topics again in considerable more depth. (plate tectonics, faults, earthquakes, mountain making, volcanoes – the different types of lava, types of eruptions, types of volcanoes
- ❑ Oceans – ocean plates; tides & currents; ocean depth; water forms;
- ❑ Rocks & Minerals, rock cycle, Earth's surface (water; weathering), erosion, soil & soil types, mass movements
- ❑ Layers of the Atmospheres
- ❑ Weather & Climate; Meteorology
 - ❑ The Earth & its atmosphere
 - ❑ Layers of the atmosphere
 - ❑ Causes of weather
 - ❑ Weather systems, global wind systems, jet streams, fronts, air masses
 - ❑ Storms
 - ❑ Climate
 - ❑ Weather analysis & forecasts
- ❑ **Electricity & Circuits** (basic concepts of charge, current, basic atomic theory, electric current, resistance, circuits & schematic diagrams, series & parallel circuits. We did this after we covered the physical properties of matter. We went on to talk in-depth about electricity and did a lot of fun activities building circuits, talking about conduction, insulators, etc.
- ❑ Energy motion, Forces – Gravity, Friction, Work & Energy (potential & kinetic energy), Machines, Newton's 3 Laws of Motion

[science-year-in-review-6th-grade/](#)

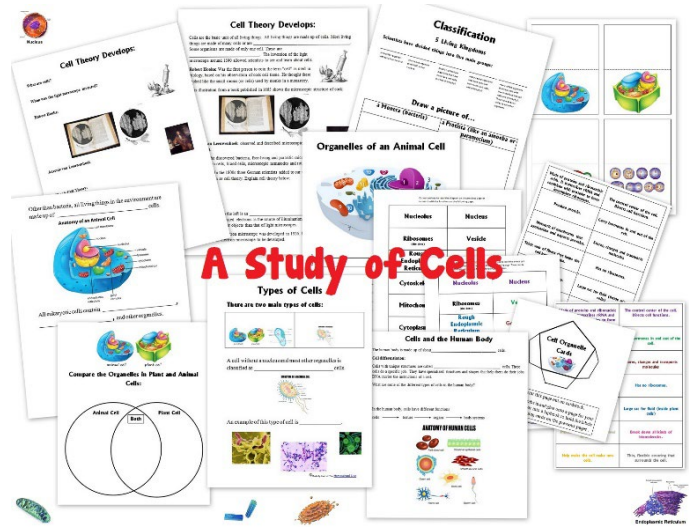


-
- Circulatory System**
Hands-On Activity about arteries, veins, capillaries & blood flow!
- homeschoolscience.com

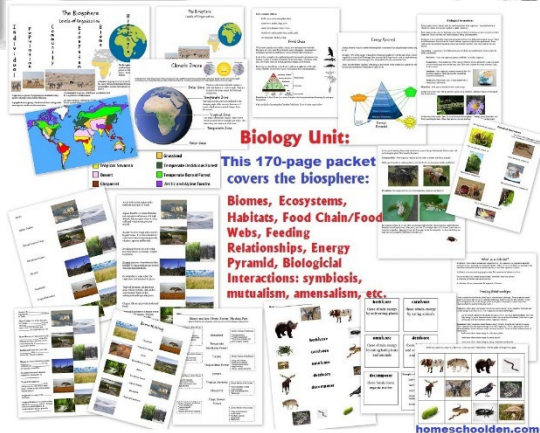
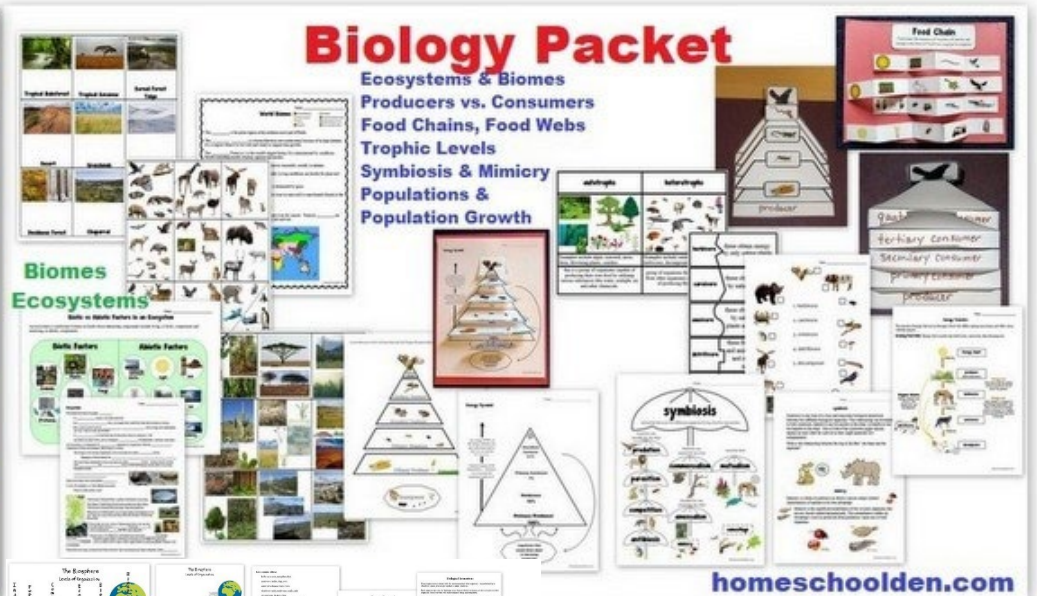
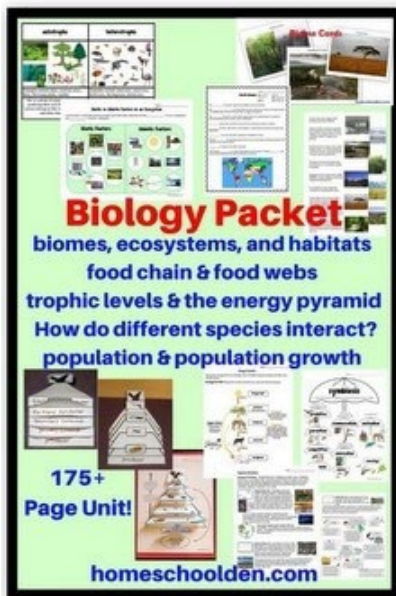
Science

Biology/Life Science:

Cells – Plants vs. Animal Cells; eukaryotic vs. prokaryotic cells, human body cells – (We also did a study of leaves and talked about photosynthesis when we did this unit again.)



Ecology/Biology – the biosphere: biomes, habitats, food chains & the food web, trophic levels, the energy pyramid, biological relationships, feeding relationships – When we did this unit, we also watched the BBC documentary, Planet Earth with David Attenborough. The kids loved this series!

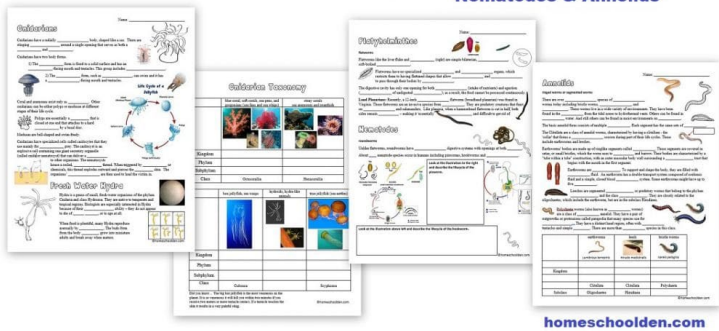


Scientific Classification & Taxonomy – Classifying Organisms, Dissection

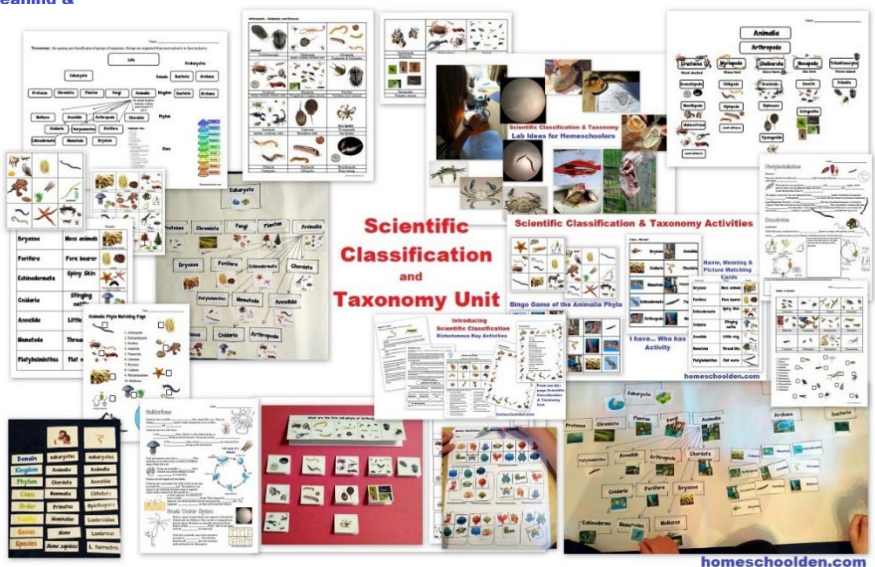
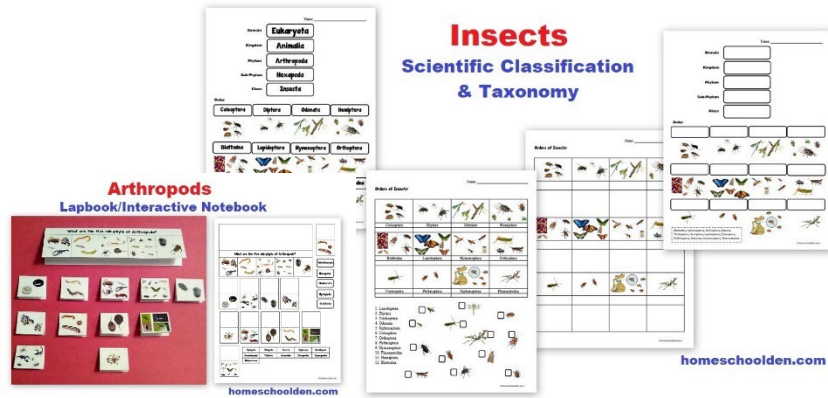
When my kids were younger, we studied some of the basic animal characteristics. In this unit, we went into depth about the differences between animal phyla (annelids/earthworms vs. platyhelminths/flatworms, for example!). Plus in this unit, we did some basic dissection (clams/oysters, crabs, fish)



Scientific Classification & Taxonomy: Cnidarians, Platyhelminthes, Nematodes & Annelids



Scientific Classification & Taxonomy Activities



Oceans — This is a pretty common unit in middle school. Some topics might include ocean life, fish form & function; bioluminescence; marine habitats; Note: we studied this both from a biological perspective, but also as one of the 4 major Earth Systems... so we talked about marine habitats, the ocean floor, sonar, salinity, ocean tides, ocean currents and so forth. [This is a common unit in public school middle schools.]



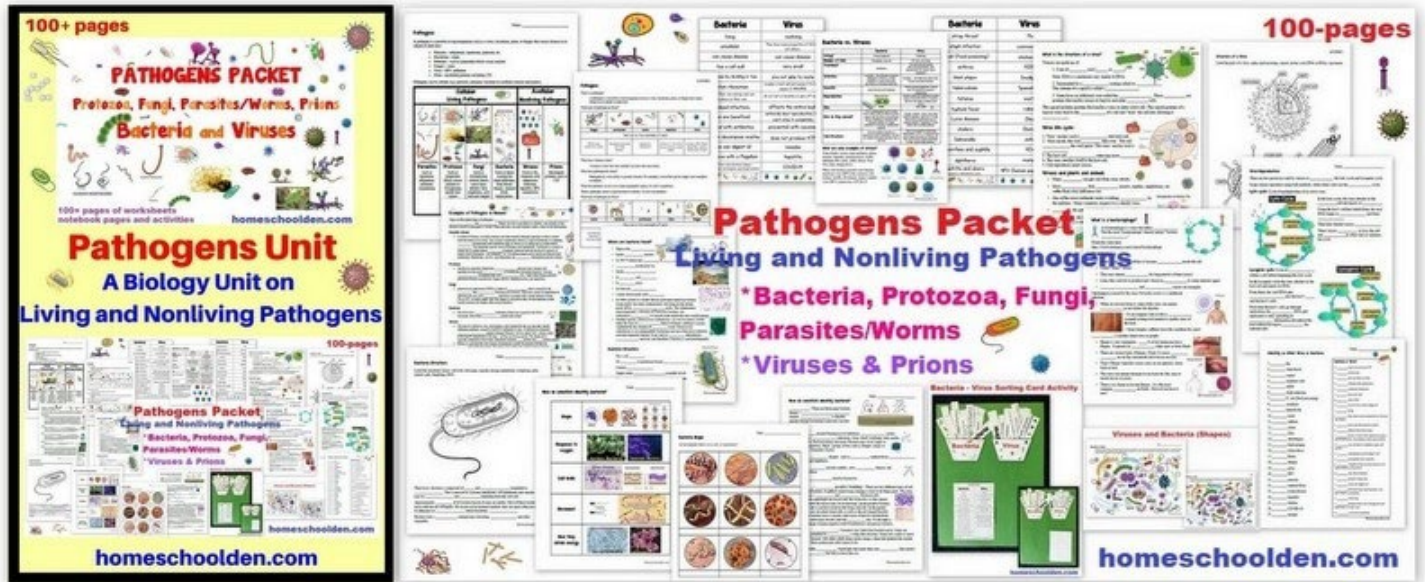
Marine Habitats



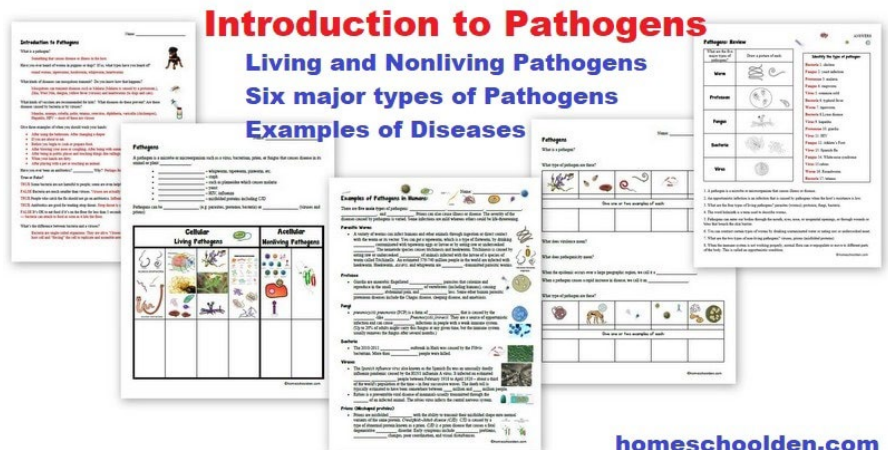
Pathogens

When my daughter was in 8th grade, we did a biology unit on ecology which covered everything from biomes and ecosystems to feeding relationships/food webs and populations. Towards the end of that unit, we talked about the biological relationships among different species. Some relationships between animals (or plants) or beneficial, while others are harmful.

Once we completed our Biology Unit, we moved on to looking more closely at those **harmful interactions**. We did a huge unit on **Pathogens**.



- What diseases are caused by bacteria? viruses?
- What causes malaria? Yes, mosquitoes carry it, but did you know protozoa actually cause the disease?!
- What kinds of diseases can you get from fungi?
- What are prions? How do they cause diseases?
- What is the structure of bacteria? of viruses?
- How do they replicate?
- What causes mumps? typhoid fever? tetanus? rabies? small pox? the flu? strep throat? cholera? By the end of this unit, you and your kids will know what causes these diseases and more!!



Genetics – You might want to do a basic unit about DNA & genetics. (We'll probably do that in the next year or so)

Anatomy & Physiology (note: we generally reviewed the cells/tissues/organs/systems each year and studied ONE of the human body systems in depth each year) See our [Human Body BUNDLE](#) [here](#).

[Cells, tissue, organs, body systems](#)

[Skeletal System](#) – structure & function of the bones

[Muscular System](#)

[Circulatory System](#)

[Digestive System](#)

[Nutrition & Health](#) (fiber, vitamins – we did this after our study of the Digestive System)

The Brain & the [Nervous System](#)

[Endocrine System](#)

Reproductive System

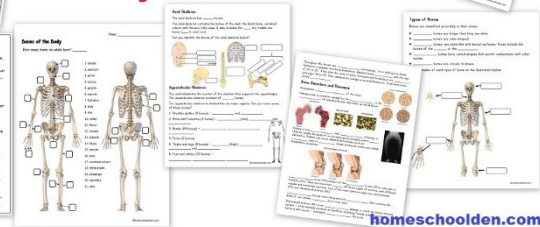
Body Growth & Development



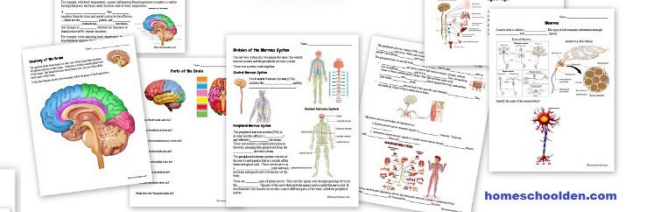
Human Body System Worksheets



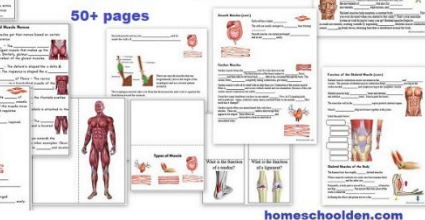
Skeletal System Unit



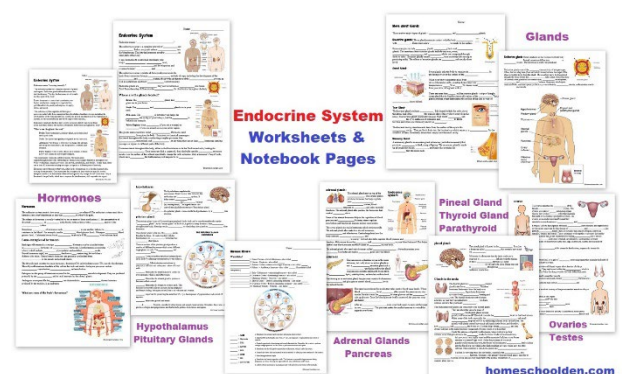
Nervous System Packet



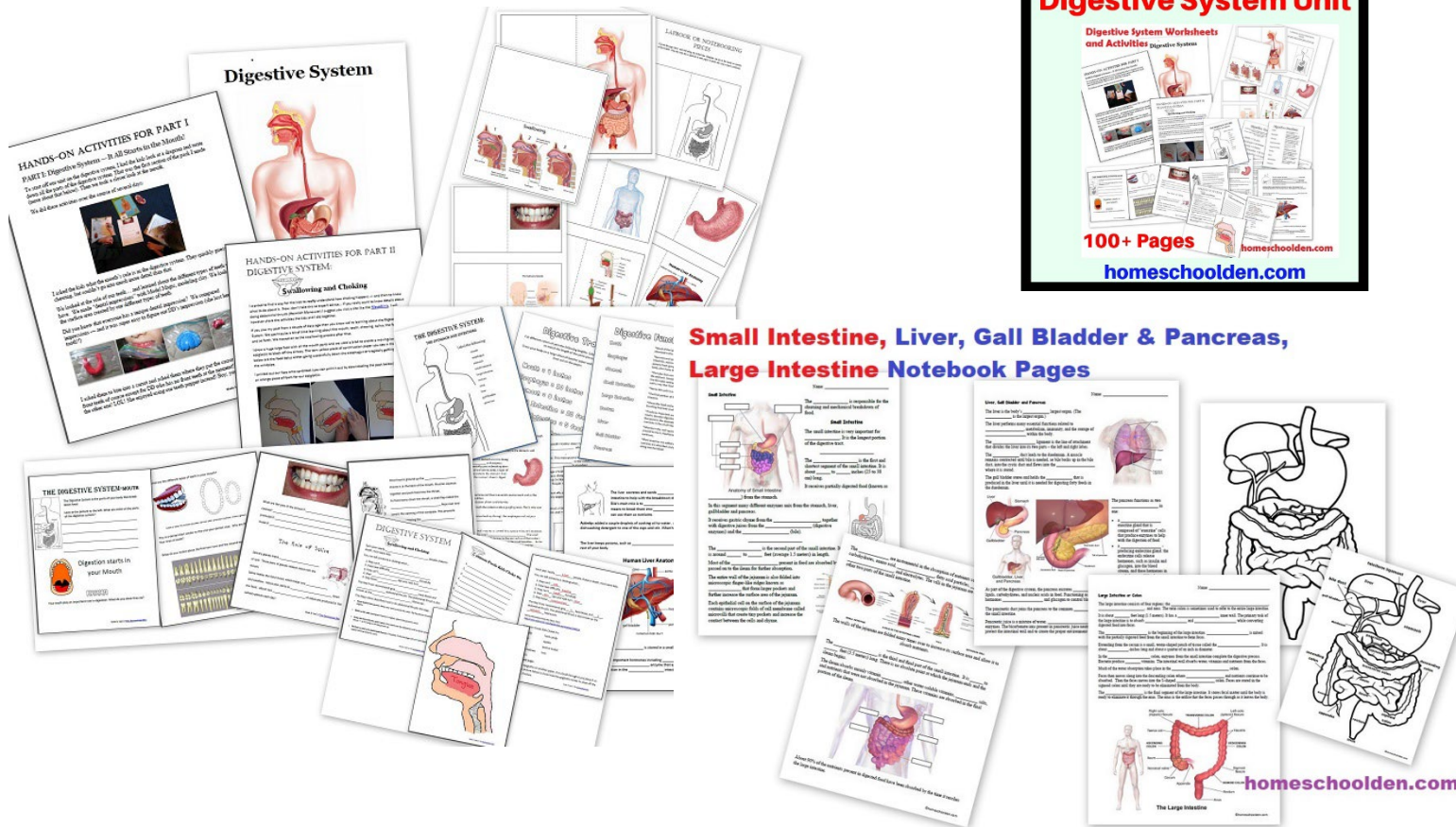
Muscular System Packet



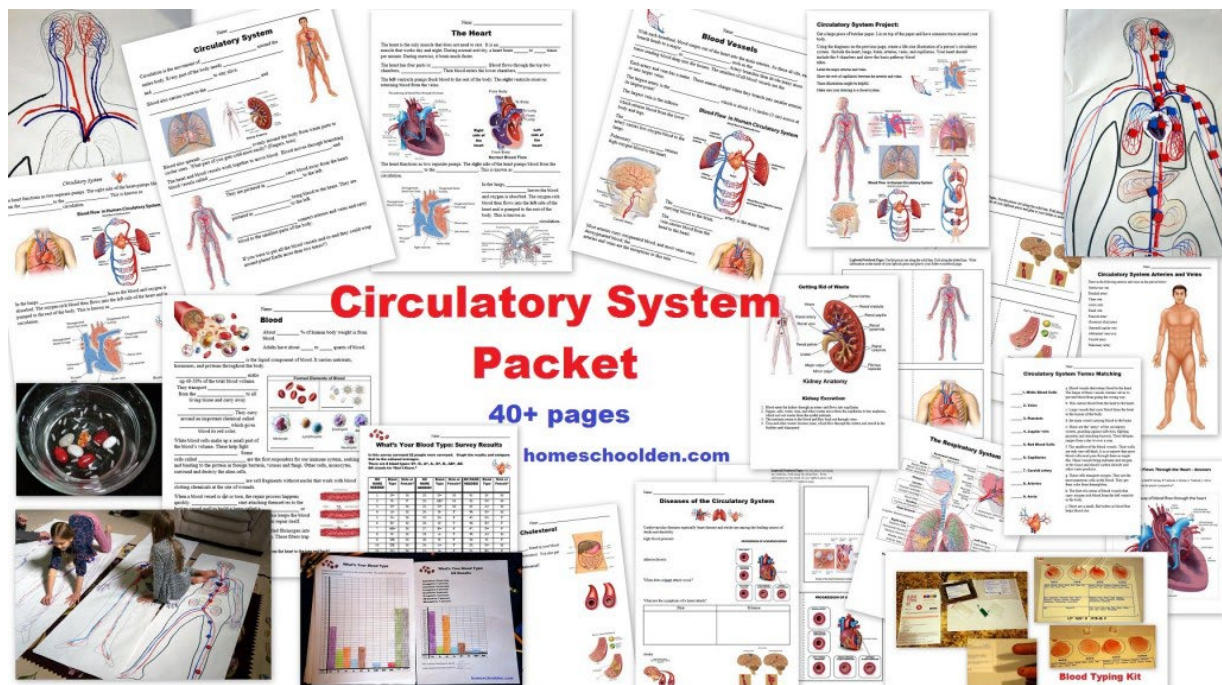
Endocrine System Worksheets & Notebook Pages



We studied the [Digestive system](#) when the kids were younger, but then did this unit again and went over the parts of the small and large intestines and went into much more detail about the liver, gall bladder and pancreas. We also did a unit on nutrition, vitamins and fiber (to touch on health/nutrition).



[Circulatory System](#) – We talked about the heart, blood vessels – arteries, veins, and capillaries, what blood is composed of, blood types and more:



Botany – 4 Main Plant Groups Flowering Plants, Mosses, Ferns, and Cone-bearing plants – Plant Life Cycle, parts of a flower, parts of a seed, etc.

We went over the parts of a flower when the kids were younger, but I want to go over botany in more detail when the girls are in middle school. We covered the Plant Kingdom and talked about mosses, ferns, gymnosperms and angiosperms.



Chemistry:

Periodic Table:

Atoms – Atomic Structure; Bohr Model;

Elements and the Periodic Table (classifying matter: metals & nonmetals, mixtures & pure substances); names of elements – chemical symbols; symbols & atomic structure; periodic patterns; chemical families

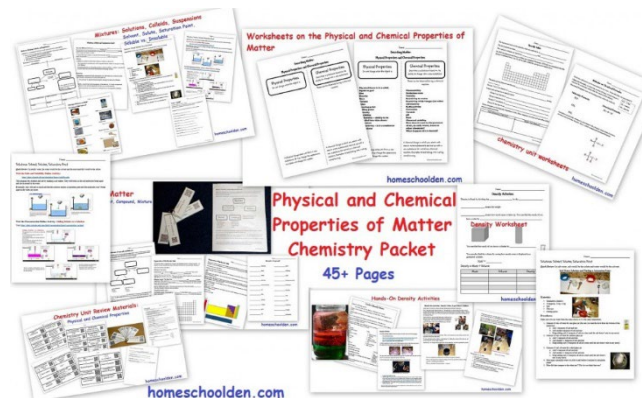
Compounds & Chemical Change; chemical bonds (ionic & covalent bonds); Molecules; Building Molecules

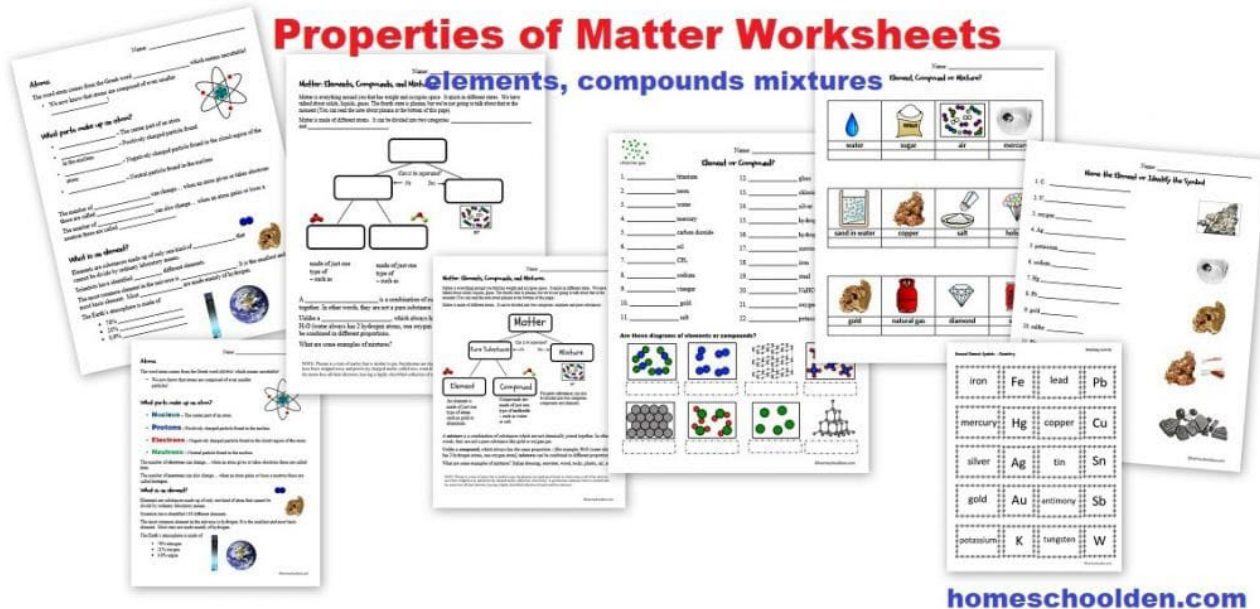
States of Matter, Physical & Chemical Properties of Matter, density



Properties of Matter Unit:

- Atoms
- Elements & Compounds
- Molecular vs. structural formulas
- Physical and Chemical Properties
- Basic definitions (of terms such as viscosity, elasticity, capillarity, ductility, malleability, etc.)
- Hands-On Activities of some of these properties (viscosity, cohesion, capillary action, etc.)
- Density Activities
- Mixtures: Solutions, Colloids and Suspensions
- Separating Mixtures



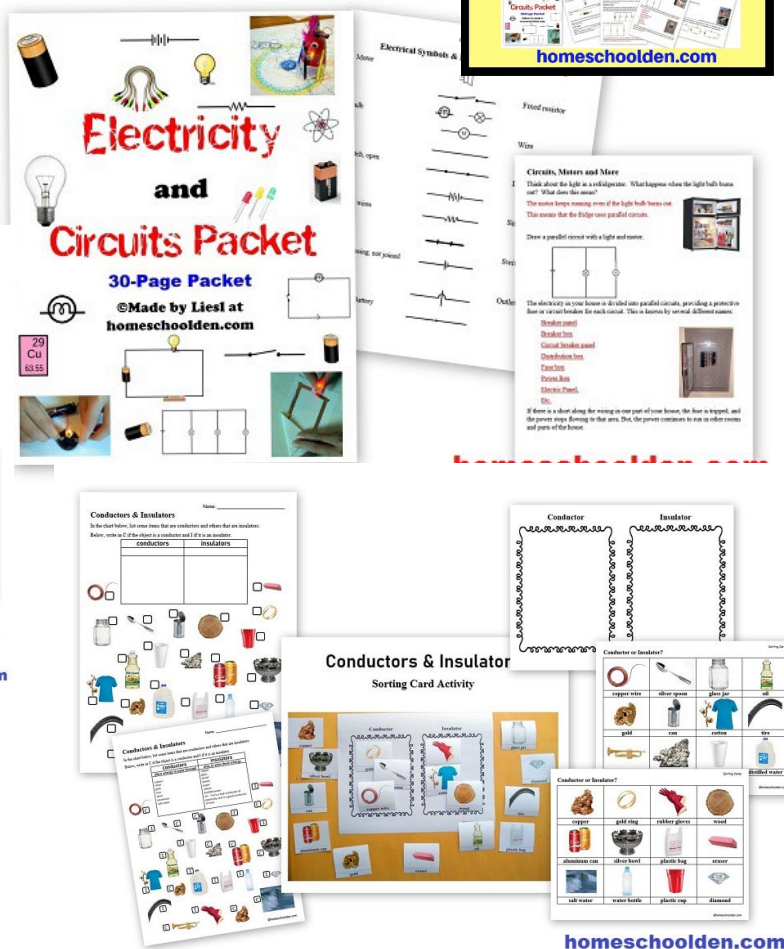
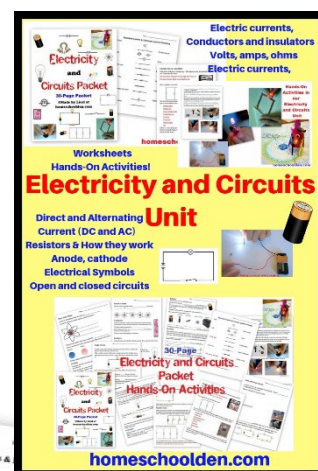


Electricity and Circuits

After we did the properties of matter unit, did a fun, hands-on unit on **Electricity and Circuits**. My daughter did this in 6th grade and really loved it!

My kids absolutely loved all the projects... from paper circuits, to squishy circuits, an art bot and more... while learning about

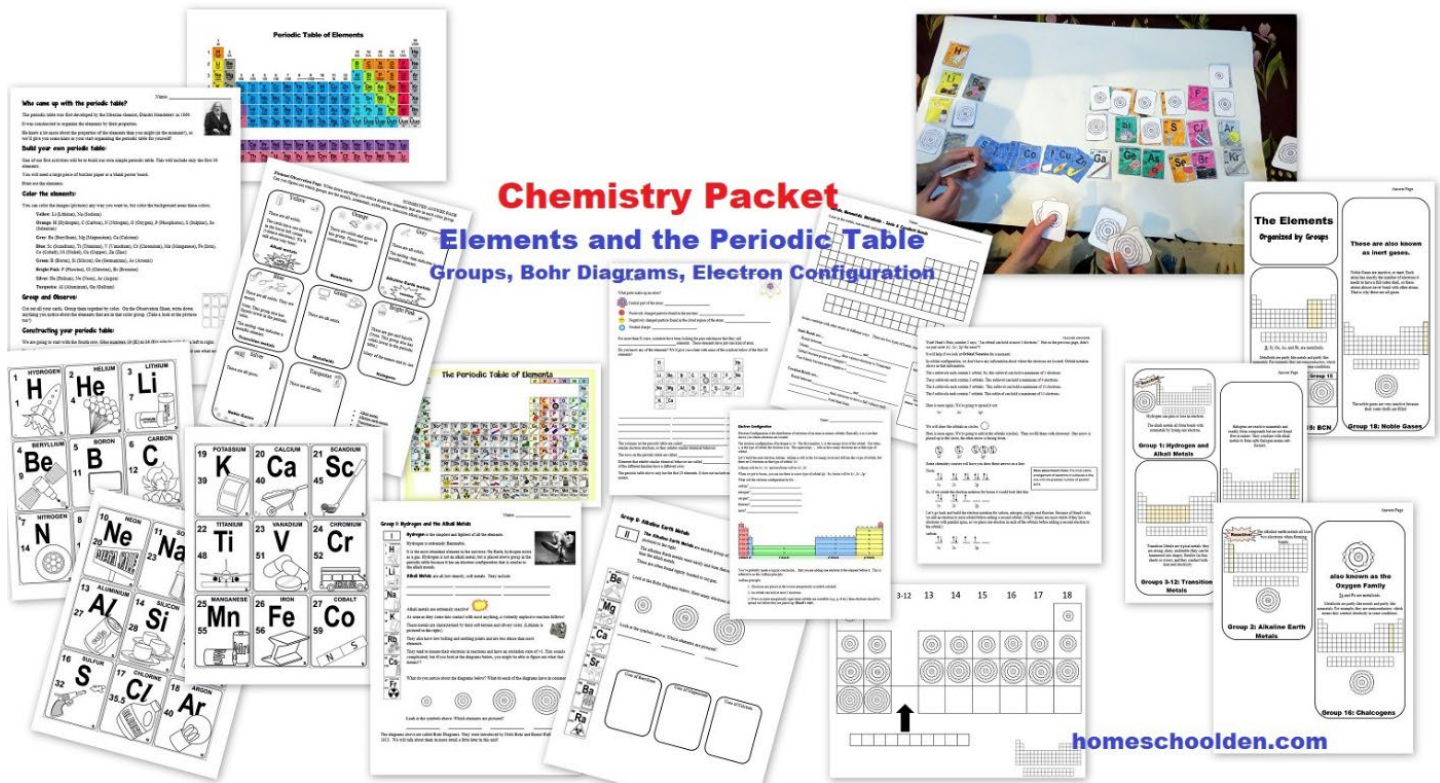
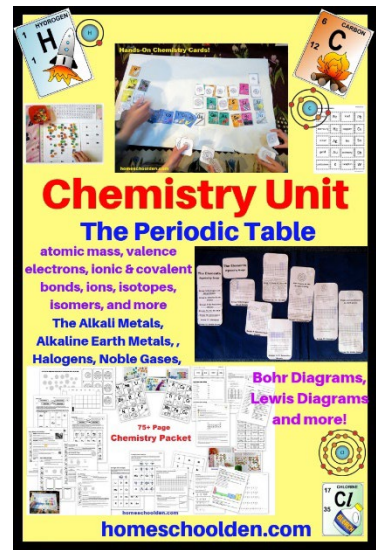
- Volts, amps, ohms
- Electrical circuits: Power source, load, conductor
- Simple Circuits
- Direct and Alternating Current (DC and AC)
- Resistance, Resistors and How they work.
- and more!



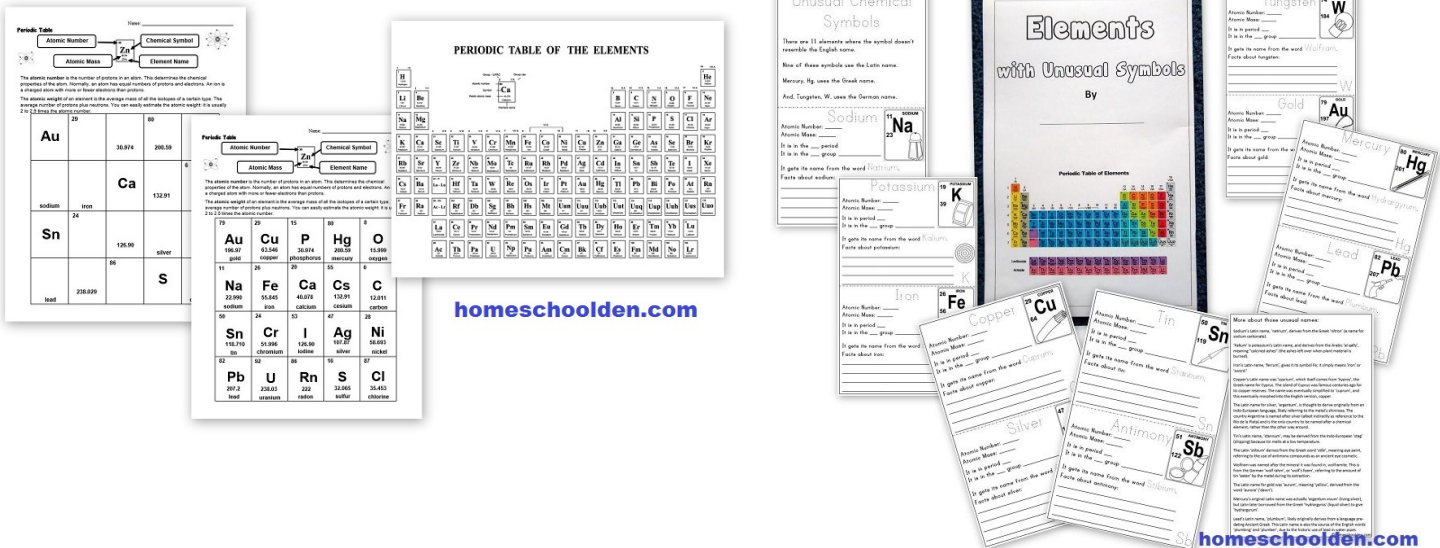
Chemistry Unit

The Chemistry Unit goes into detail about the periodic table, valence electrons, periods, groups, Lewis Diagrams, and basic vocabulary such as ions and isotopes.

Students are introduced to the structure of the periodic table, Bohr Diagrams, Lewis Diagrams and electron configuration in a fun, hands-on way! There are also booklets for students to become familiar with the first 20 elements and elements with unusual names.

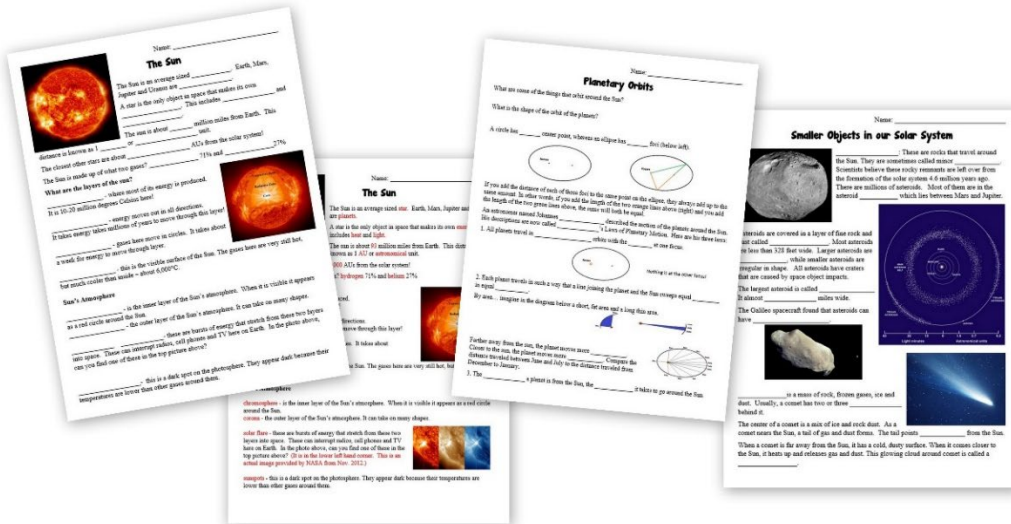


Periodic Table -- atomic number, atomic weight, chemical symbols & the element names

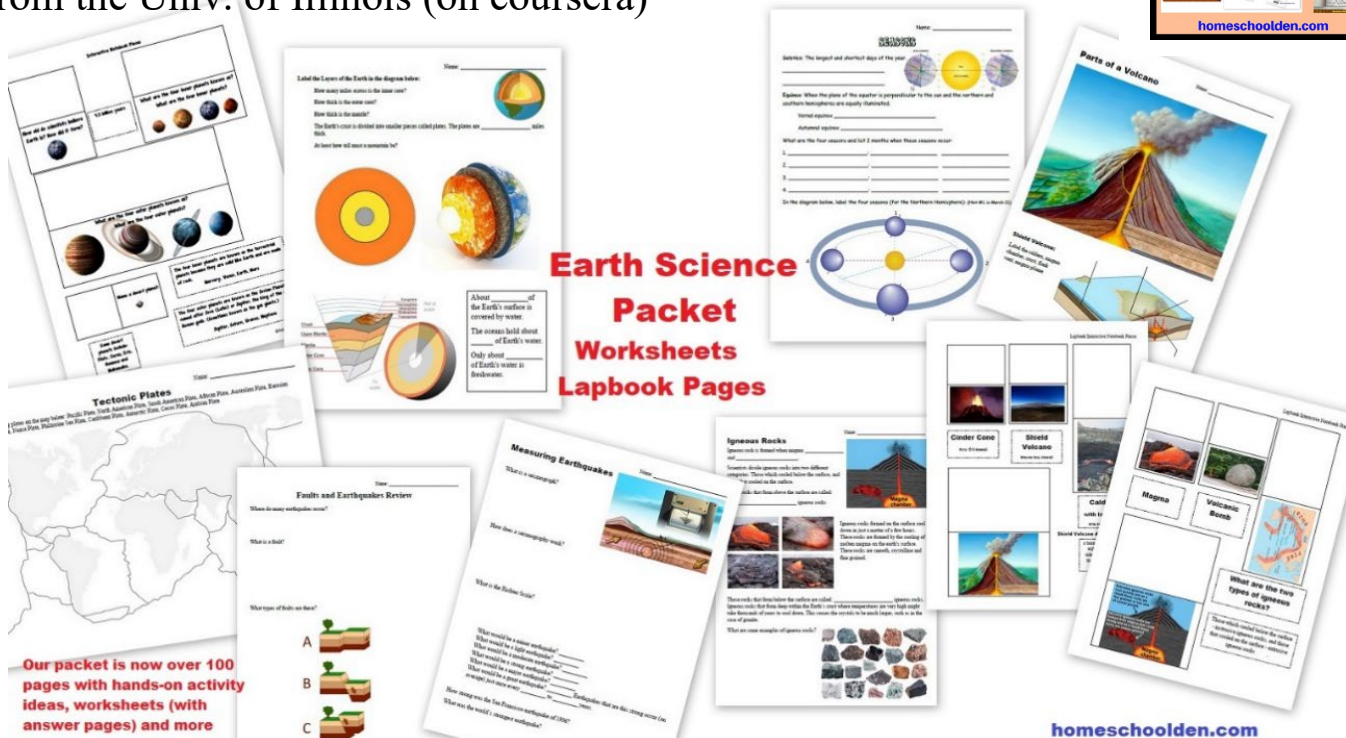
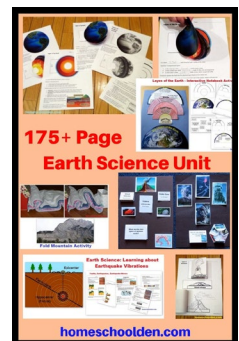


Physical Science

Solar System; planetary orbits (elliptical orbits; Kepler's Laws of Planetary Motion; the Sun (energy, layers of the Sun, Sun's atmosphere, etc.) the Universe. (We did a brief unit on this and have some free notebook pages about the layers of the sun, sun spots, elliptical orbits and things like that. You'll find these here: [Astronomy Middle School – free worksheets](#))



[Earth Science](#) – We did this unit when the kids were younger, but then we came back and covered these topics again in more depth. (plate tectonics, faults, earthquakes, mountain making, volcanoes – the different types of lava, types of eruptions, types of volcanoes and more.) Plus, we used lectures by a professor from the Univ. of Illinois (on coursera)



Features of the Ocean Floor

Name _____

Features of the Ocean Floor

Label the features of the ocean floor:

Labels to be placed in the diagram:

- Shoal
- Shelf
- Continental Shelf
- Continental Slope
- Continental Rise
- Deep
- Seamount
- Hydrothermal Vents
- Submarine Ridge
- Submarine Trench
- Submarine Valley
- Submarine Canyon
- Submarine Plateau
- Submarine Ridge
- Submarine Trench
- Submarine Valley
- Submarine Canyon
- Submarine Plateau

Use these words to label the diagram below: Continental Shelf, Continental Slope, Continental Rise, Deep, Seamount, Hydrothermal Vents, Submarine Ridge, Submarine Trench, Submarine Valley, Submarine Canyon, Submarine Plateau.

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The image displays a collection of educational materials for a 'Rocks and Minerals' unit. The materials include:

- Rock Cycle Diagrams:** Several circular diagrams illustrating the processes of rock formation and transformation, including melting, crystallization, sedimentation, and metamorphism.
- Rock Classifications:** Worksheets that categorize rocks into igneous, sedimentary, and metamorphic types, often with sub-classifications and examples.
- Mineral Properties:** Worksheets detailing the characteristics of various minerals, such as color, luster, and hardness.
- Rock and Mineral Photographs:** Numerous images of different rock and mineral samples, providing visual aids for identification and study.
- Packet Covers:** Two prominent covers for 'Rocks and Minerals' packets, one labeled '76 pages' and another '78 pages', both featuring vibrant designs and the website 'homeschoolden.com'.
- Geological Processes:** Worksheets explaining processes like erosion, sedimentation, and the formation of different rock types.

The materials are presented in a layered, overlapping manner, showcasing a variety of content suitable for homeschooling or classroom use.

[illegible]

[illegible]

Layers of the Atmosphere Packet

**Notebook Pages, Hands-on Activities
and More!**

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

Weather Map Symbols

Isobars: lines of equal pressure. Contour interval: 4 mb.

High pressure system: blue 'H' with isobars curving inward.

Low pressure system: blue 'L' with isobars curving outward.

Fronts: lines with symbols indicating cold (blue triangles), warm (red semicircles), and occluded (alternating) fronts.

Global Winds

Trade winds: blow from the northeast in the Northern Hemisphere and from the southeast in the Southern Hemisphere.

Westerlies: blow from the southwest in the Northern Hemisphere and from the northwest in the Southern Hemisphere.

Polar easterlies: blow from the northeast in the Northern Hemisphere and from the southeast in the Southern Hemisphere.

El Niño or La Niña?

El Niño: warm ocean waters move from the west to the east, causing a shift in the global circulation pattern.

La Niña: even warmer ocean waters move from the west to the east, causing a more extreme shift in the global circulation pattern.

Jet Streams

Polar jet stream: flows from the Arctic region towards the equator.

Subtropical jet stream: flows from the subtropical high pressure areas towards the equator.

Equatorial jet stream: flows from the equator towards the poles.

Local Winds

Breeze: wind that blows from the water towards the land during the day.

Land breeze: wind that blows from the land towards the water during the night.

Sea breeze: wind that blows from the water towards the land during the day.

What picture shows each of the three types of winds?

Global winds: trade winds, westerlies, polar easterlies.

Jet streams: polar jet, subtropical jet, equatorial jet.

Local winds: breeze, land breeze, sea breeze.

Winds, Weather Fronts and More...

Winds: air in motion. Caused by differences in air pressure.

Weather fronts: boundaries between air masses of different temperatures and humidities.

High and Low Pressure Systems: areas of high and low atmospheric pressure.

El Niño or La Niña?

El Niño: warm ocean waters move from the west to the east, causing a shift in the global circulation pattern.

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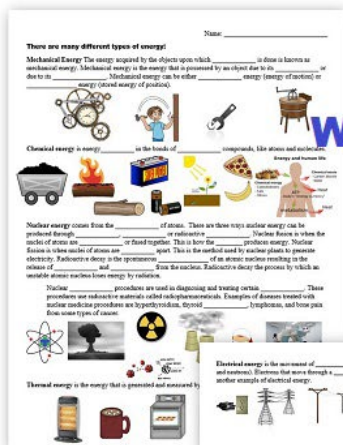
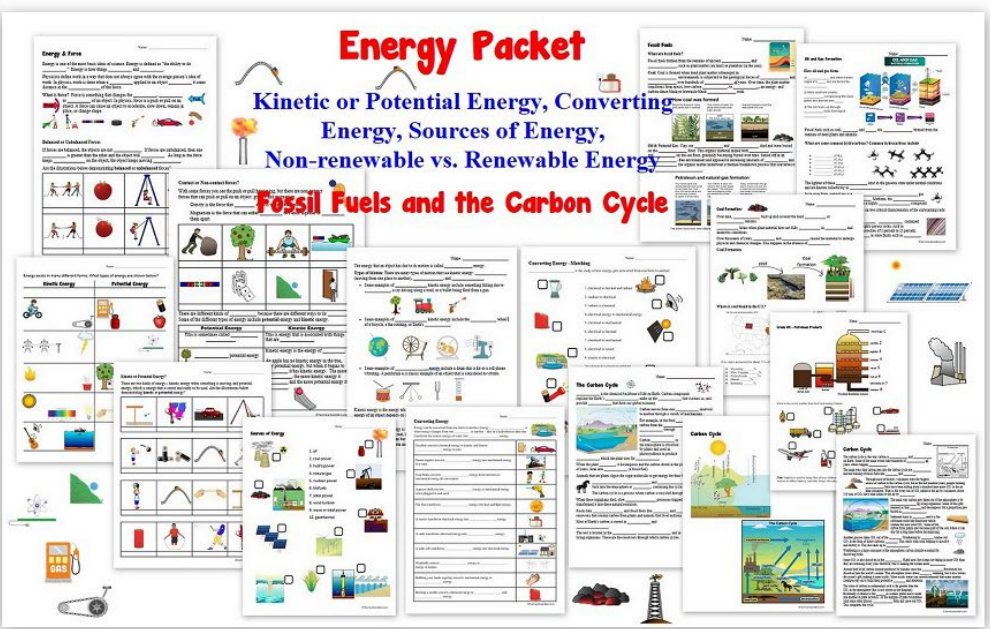
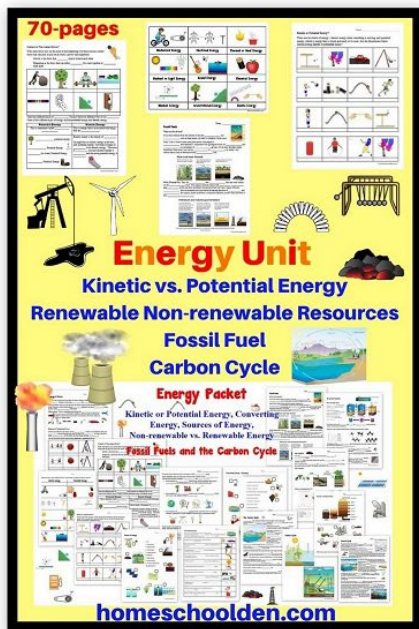
Global winds: trade winds, westerlies, polar easterlies.

Jet streams: polar jet, subtropical jet, equatorial jet.

Local winds: breeze, land breeze, sea breeze.

Physical Science

Energy: Motion, Forces – Gravity, Friction, Work & Energy (potential & kinetic energy), Machines, Newton's 3 Laws of Motion



Types of Energy Worksheets and Activities

Mechanical Energy, Chemical Energy, Nuclear Energy, Thermal, Electrical, Elastic, Sound, Radiant & Gravitational Energy



Energy Packet

Kinetic or Potential Energy, Converting Energy, Sources of Energy, Non-renewable vs. Renewable Energy

Fossil Fuels and the Carbon Cycle

Energy & Force

Energy is one of the most basic ideas of science. Energy is defined as "the ability to do work." Energy is a **scalar** quantity and **is not** a vector quantity.

Physicists define work as a force that does not change with the average person's idea of work. In physics, work is done when a **force** is applied to an object **in the direction** of the force.

What is force? Force is something that changes the **motion** of an object. In physics, force is a push or pull on an object. A force can cause an object to accelerate, slow down, remain in place, or change shape.

Balanced or Unbalanced Forces

If forces are balanced, the objects are in **equilibrium**. If forces are unbalanced, there is a **net force** on the object, and the object will **accelerate**. As long as the forces **cancel out**, the object will remain in **equilibrium**.

Are the illustrations below demonstrating balanced or unbalanced forces?

Unbalanced Forces

Unbalanced forces cause an object to accelerate. In the first illustration, a person is pushing a box to the right. In the second illustration, a person is pulling a rope to the left. In the third illustration, a person is pushing a box to the right, and another person is pulling it to the left.

Kinetic Energy

Kinetic energy is the energy of **motion**. It is the energy that an object has because it is moving. Kinetic energy is a **scalar** quantity and **is not** a vector quantity.

Potential Energy

Potential energy is the energy that an object has because of its **position**. It is the energy that an object has because it is **not** moving. Potential energy is a **scalar** quantity and **is not** a vector quantity.

Types of Potential Energy

There are two types of potential energy: **gravitational potential energy** and **elastic potential energy**.

Gravitational Potential Energy

Gravitational potential energy is the energy that an object has because of its **position** relative to the ground. It is the energy that an object has because it is **not** moving.

Elastic Potential Energy

Elastic potential energy is the energy that an object has because of its **position** relative to its **rest position**. It is the energy that an object has because it is **not** moving.

Converting Energy - Matching

In the study of how energy gets converted from one form to another, we call this **energy conversion**.

1. chemical to thermal and radiant
2. nuclear to electrical
3. radiant to chemical
4. chemical to mechanical
5. chemical to thermal
6. chemical to mechanical
7. chemical to sound
8. kinetic to mechanical
9. chemical to thermal and light
10. light energy to electrical
11. electrical to light
12. electrical to radiant

The Carbon Cycle

The carbon cycle is the process by which carbon is exchanged between the atmosphere, land, and water. It is a **biogeochemical cycle** that involves the exchange of carbon between the atmosphere, land, and water.

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Sources of Energy

There are many sources of energy, including **solar energy**, **wind energy**, **hydro energy**, **geothermal energy**, **nuclear energy**, **coal energy**, **oil energy**, **gas energy**, **biomass energy**, **tidal energy**, and **wave energy**.

Non-renewable vs. Renewable Energy

Non-renewable Energy

Non-renewable energy is energy that comes from **finite sources** and **cannot be replaced** once it is used. Examples of non-renewable energy include **coal**, **oil**, **gas**, and **nuclear energy**.

Renewable Energy

Renewable energy is energy that comes from **infinite sources** and **can be replaced** once it is used. Examples of renewable energy include **solar energy**, **wind energy**, **hydro energy**, **geothermal energy**, **biomass energy**, **tidal energy**, and **wave energy**.

Types of Energy, Converting Energy Worksheets

Types of Energy

Energy exists in many different forms. What types of energy are shown below?

Mechanical Energy	Electrical Energy	Thermal or Heat Energy
Radiant or Light Energy	Sound Energy	Chemical Energy
Nuclear Energy	Gravitational Energy	

Converting Energy - Matching

In the study of how energy gets converted from one form to another, we call this **energy conversion**.

1. chemical to thermal and radiant
2. nuclear to electrical
3. radiant to chemical
4. chemical to mechanical
5. chemical to thermal
6. chemical to mechanical
7. chemical to sound
8. kinetic to mechanical
9. chemical to thermal and light
10. light energy to electrical
11. electrical to light
12. electrical to radiant

Types of Energy

The energy that an object has due to its motion is called **kinetic energy**.

Types of Motion: There are many types of motion that can be kinetic energy:

- Some examples of **kinetic energy** include something falling due to a car driving along a road, or a ball being fired from a gun.
- Some examples of **kinetic energy** include the **rotation** of a bicycle, a fan rotating, or Earth's **rotation**.
- Some examples of **kinetic energy** include a **drum** that is hit or a **cell phone** vibrating. A **pendulum** is a classic example of an object that is considered to vibrate.

Kinetic Energy

Kinetic energy is the energy that an object has because of its **motion**. It is the energy that an object has because it is **not** moving.

Potential Energy

Potential energy is the energy that an object has because of its **position**. It is the energy that an object has because it is **not** moving.

Converting Energy

Energy can be converted from one form to another. For example, a car engine converts **chemical energy** into **mechanical energy**.

Types of Energy

There are many types of energy, including **solar energy**, **wind energy**, **hydro energy**, **geothermal energy**, **nuclear energy**, **coal energy**, **oil energy**, **gas energy**, **biomass energy**, **tidal energy**, and **wave energy**.

Non-renewable vs. Renewable Energy

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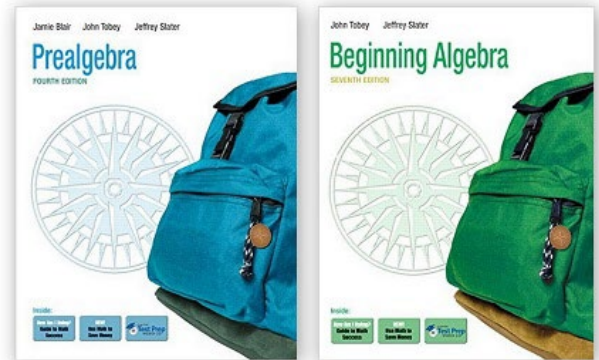
Renewable Energy

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Middle School Math

There are tons of math curriculum options. We used Spectrum math workbooks and Math Reasoning (by the Critical Thinking Company) in the elementary years in addition to numerous worksheets that I made for the kids.

In middle school, we used PreAlgebra and Algebra by Toby and Slater. Those have worked well for our family. I used an older edition so that I could purchase the Teacher's Edition (to be able to check answers) for a reasonable price used from Amazon. We used these on the recommendation of another homeschooling family and they worked well for us. They have good example problems & explanations.



You might also want to ask your homeschooling connections on and off line to see what worked for their families. 😊

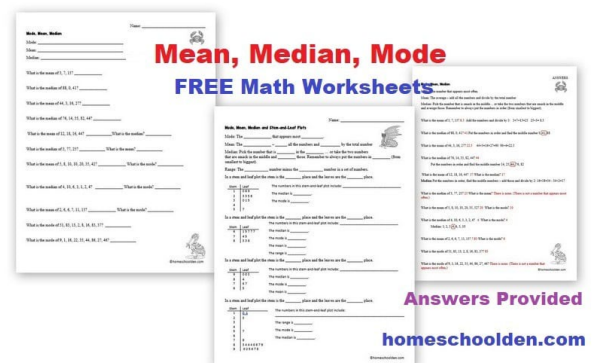
Note: When my kids were ready for Geometry, Algebra II, PreCalculus and Calculus we used Thinkwell. We purchased the textbook/workbook that goes along with those. This program provides video lectures (usually about 4-8 minutes long) with practice exercises that follow. We didn't use Thinkwell for Grade 6, PreAlgebra and Algebra (because I really liked the Toby & Slater books, but I know some homeschoolers who used Thinkwell in Middle School as well.

If you are interested, my share code will give you 15% off

<http://thinkwellhomeschoo.refr.cc/lieslm>

P.S. We have [free Mean, Median, Mode practice pages](#) on the website.

<https://homeschoolden.com/2021/05/13/mean-median-mode-free-math-worksheets/>



Social Studies & History

Geography

I put this section first because if people have a good solid feel for geography they'll be able to understand the nuances of world history much better!

- ☐ Countries of the world: 10 Days in Europe; 10 Days in Africa; 10 Days in Asia (These board games are fabulous for helping kids learn the location of countries on these continents!)
- ☐ Geographic features, landforms, world landmarks
- ☐ We actually used pin maps quite a lot in grades 6-8 to help review the location of various places around the world.
- ☐ World's deserts; oceans, seas & straits;
- ☐ World Facts

History

The topics you choose, will really depend on what you've covered already. If your child hasn't had much history yet, you can start with the Ancients and move forward from there! Our family has chosen to weave in various American History Units along the way, but some families spend a year studying American History from the Colonial Period through Civil Rights

- ☐ American History (Colonial Period through the 20th century) **See Am. His Checklist
- ☐ Ancient History – Mesopotamia/Sumer/Babylon, Egypt, Greece, Rome
- ☐ World History: China, India, Africa & and introduction to World Religions
- ☐ Middle Ages
- ☐ European History 1450-1650: Renaissance; Reformation; Age of Exploration; Age of Absolutism; Scientific Revolution; Enlightenment
- ☐ American Revolution
- ☐ French Revolution, Napoleon and post-Napoleonic Europe
- ☐ American History – Many schools do an entire year of American History in 8th grade and again as an honors or AP class in high school

20th Century and Beyond:

- ☐ Industrialization
- ☐ Nationalism
- ☐ WWI
- ☐ Roaring 20s
- ☐ Crash & Great Depression
- ☐ Rise of Hitler (30s)
- ☐ WWII
- ☐ Containment; Fear of Communism; Domino Effect; Berlin Crisis; Korean War
- ☐ 1950s America
- ☐ Vietnam War
- ☐ Anti-War Movement
- ☐ Civil Rights Movement
- ☐ Great Society, Civil Rights Act
- ☐ 1970s

Analyzing historical texts, interpretations, and evidence.

Civics & Government

If you haven't covered this already, you may want to go over the 3 branches of government; role of the federal vs. state and local governments; cabinet positions; basic facts about the U.S. constitution (What are the basic roles and functions of each branch of government? How many years can a President serve? How many years can a Senator or Congressman serve? How old do you have to be to hold a public office?)

Types of Government – As you move into the Age of Absolutism & Enlightenment this might be a good time to introduce your kids to the different forms of government (monarchs, democracy, oligarchy, junta)

Types of Society – I introduced my kids to these terms – socialism, communism, fascism, capitalism

World Leaders – Current Events



American History Checklist



American Beginnings

- ☐ Native Americans
- ☐ Age of Exploration – Spanish conquest/settlement of the Americas
- ☐ Colonies
- ☐ Conflict with Indians & the Colonial Empire/s
- ☐ Causes/Events leading to the American Revolution; War for Independence

The New Nation

- ☐ Starting the New Nation (Articles of Confederation; Constitution)
- ☐ Federalist Era
- ☐ 1800-1830 Jefferson, Madison, Monroe (Lewis & Clark; War of 1812; Monroe Doctrine)
- ☐ Age of Jackson (2 party system; Trail of Tears)
- ☐ Era of Reforms – **Inventions** (McCormick, Goodyear, Howe/Singer, Fulton, Morse) – **Societal Reform** (Dorothea Dix, Garrison, Nat Turner, Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman) **Women struggle for equality** (Lucretia Mott; Grimke sisters; Emma Willard; Amelia Bloomer; Elizabeth Blackwell; Elizabeth Cady Stanton; Susan B. Anthony; Julia Ward Howe – 19th Amendment in 1920)

The Nation Grows, Divides, Reunites

- ☐ Slavery; Territorial Growth, War with Mexico, Expansion & Conflict
- ☐ Civil War
- ☐ Reconstruction – Radical Reconstruction
- ☐ Jim Crow Laws

The Growth of the Industrial Giant

- ☐ American West – Great Plains Conflicts
- ☐ Industrial Age (1876-1900) Industries (iron, steel, coal) expand, RRs, unionism, populist movement, urban growth

- ☐ Cities and immigrants (immigrant restrictions)
- ☐ Progressive Era

World Stage -

- ☐ Hawaii, War with Spain;
- ☐ WWI
- ☐ Roaring 20s, Isolationism
- ☐ Great Depression, New Deal & Reform
- ☐ 1930s Europe; WWII
- ☐ Cold War, Korean War
- ☐ Vietnam War

Societal Changes

- ☐ 1950s - Suburbia
- ☐ 1960s – Kennedy’s New Frontier
- ☐ Civil Rights Movement (Kennedy; LBJ)
- ☐ Nixon Years
- ☐ 1970s – Ford (Pardon of Nixon, Japan, Freedom of Information Act, Privacy Act, Oil shortages/OPEC, Cambodia) and Carter (Energy Crisis, inflation, ERA defeated, SALT, Camp David Accords, Iranian Revolution - Iran hostage crisis)
- ☐ Reagan years (End of the cold war - Evil Empire; telling Mikhail Gorbachev to “tear down this wall”; Reaganomics; GOP; Peace through strength; Star wars – strategic defense initiative; nuclear weapons cuts; tax reforms; air traffic control strike)
- ☐ George H.W. Bush; Clinton; George W. Bush; Obama; Trump

History

I wanted to mention that in the middle school years, I am having the kids work on different writing and research skills. I've had the kids

- do research papers
- do research and create power point presentations
- write essays
- start reading primary source documents and talk about how those fit into history
- start reading contemporary texts/books (like Uncle Tom's Cabin, for example) and talk about how that fits into the period
- see long term trends... I spend quite a bit of time trying to help them see long term trends... like how country relationships change over time... and influence other regions in the world.

I know that DBQ's (that stands for document based questions) and history essay writing are on the horizon for high school and college level history classes.

Language Arts

Language Arts – The list of literature books that kids can read is so long, I hesitate to even include any... but here are a few classics that you could start with:

Literature Books: There are so many amazing books, it's hard to create a comprehensive list. Here are a few options to get you started!

Call of the Wild

A Wrinkle in Time

Roll of Thunder, Hear my Cry

Tom Sawyer

Lord of the Rings

Lord of the Flies

Johnny Tremain

Flowers for Algernon

Animal Farm

Island of the Blue Dolphins

Chronicals of Narnia

The Great Gatsby

Anne Frank, Diary of a Young Girl

To Be a Slave

To Kill a Mockingbird

Little Women

The Catcher in the Rye

Catch 22

Snow Falling on Cedars

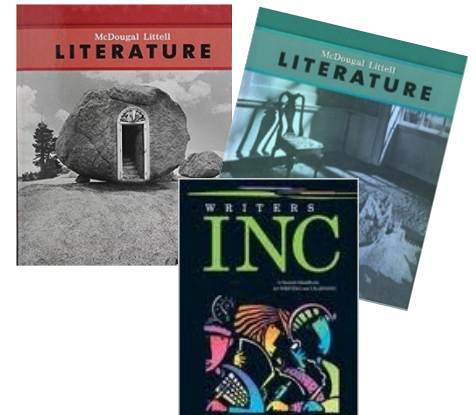
Their Eyes were Watching God

The Scarlet Letter

The Sun Also Rises

Literature Genres: Short stories, poetry, plays. Our family has been using Literature textbooks (McDougal Littell). I have the kids read for 20-30 minutes a day and they really love the selections in these books.

Grammar: This is a really great reference book for **Middle and High School Writing/Grammar:** *Writers Inc, A Student Handbook for Writing and Learning*. It is an excellent writing resource to have on hand for writing itself.



Practice Writing, writing, writing!

Essay Writing Skills (History for Long Essay Questions and Document-Based Questions)

- Thesis Statements
- Documents as Evidence
- Outside Evidence - using historical evidence to support your argument in your essays
- Structuring your Essay
- Contextualization
- Explaining Documents - POV, Situation, Audience, and Purpose
- Historical Reasoning

Language Arts Homeschool Checklist

- ☐ Write strong and varied sentences
- ☐ Creative writing
- ☐ Essay writing
- ☐ Research
 - ☐ note taking
 - ☐ outlines
 - ☐ writing papers
- ☐ Letter writing
 - ☐ informal
 - ☐ formal
- ☐ Using writing tools
 - ☐ power points
 - ☐ Word
 - ☐ Excel spreadsheets
 - ☐ blog writing
- ☐ Note taking skills (from lectures)
- ☐ Note taking skills (from books)
- ☐ Study Skills (being able to condense information and learn it using a method that works for them -- highlighting, index cards, etc.)
- ☐ Resumes (eventually, not when the kids are really young!)

WRITING GENRES:

Be familiar with various writing genres. Practice a wide variety of genres in their writing, so they are comfortable and familiar with different styles of writing:

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> short stories | <input type="checkbox"/> poetry | <input type="checkbox"/> reference articles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> novels | <input type="checkbox"/> haiku | <input type="checkbox"/> editorials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> novellas | <input type="checkbox"/> limerick | <input type="checkbox"/> TV shows |
| <input type="checkbox"/> historical fiction | <input type="checkbox"/> narrative poem | <input type="checkbox"/> advertising |
| <input type="checkbox"/> science fiction fantasy | <input type="checkbox"/> drama | <input type="checkbox"/> websites |
| <input type="checkbox"/> mystery | <input type="checkbox"/> comedies | <input type="checkbox"/> brochures |
| <input type="checkbox"/> crime | <input type="checkbox"/> historical dramas | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ghost stories/horror | <input type="checkbox"/> radio plays | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> myths | <input type="checkbox"/> biography | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> legends | <input type="checkbox"/> autobiography | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> tall tales | <input type="checkbox"/> essays | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fables | <input type="checkbox"/> speeches | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> folk tales | <input type="checkbox"/> news articles | |

LITERARY ANALYSIS:

- ☐ plot
- ☐ conflict
- ☐ setting
- ☐ characters
 - character trait
 - words
 - actions
 - protagonist, antagonist
 - archetype
- ☐ Voice
 - active vs. passive voice
- ☐ Elements of style:
 - point of view
 - first person
 - second person
 - third person
 - dialogue
 - word choice
 - sentence structure
 - imagery
- ☐ Sound devices
 - rhyme
 - rhythm
 - repetition
 - alliteration
 - onomatopoeia
- ☐ figurative speech
 - metaphor
 - simile
 - personification
- ☐ identify and analyze symbols and symbolism
- ☐ topics vs. themes
- ☐ recurring themes
- ☐ universal themes
- ☐ Main idea - supporting details
- ☐ tone

- ☐ mood
- ☐ making inferences
- ☐ sequences
- ☐ foreshadowing
- ☐ argument - claim, support, counterargument
- ☐ persuasive techniques
 - bandwagon appeal ("everyone else" likes or does something)
 - testimonial (endorsements)
 - snob appeal - desire to be a part of a group
 - loyalty - people's affiliation to a group
 - emotional appeal - pity, fear, vanity
 - word choice

GRAMMAR SKILLS

- ☐ capital letters
- ☐ commas
- ☐ semicolons
- ☐ quotation marks
- ☐ apostrophes
- ☐ italics/underlining
- ☐ homophones - their/they're/there, etc.
- ☐ plurals
- ☐ parts of speech:
 - subject, adjective, adverb, preposition, direct object, indirect object, object of a preposition, pronouns, clause, phrase, article, coordinating conjunctions, interjection, verbs - past, past participle, etc.
- ☐ diagramming a sentence
- ☐ editing

Polishing your Essay Writing Skills

1. **Assign the essay:** Make sure you have a good grasp on the topic.
2. **Give a set amount of time.**
3. **Read the essay aloud** (Or, read it aloud to yourself.)
4. Go over the **basic expectations of an essay**. Make sure you know how essays are graded.
Evaluate your own essay!

a. Did you show a good understanding of the material? Is the analysis thoughtful and insightful? Do you show original thought?

b. Is the content fair, good, wonderful or superb? Did you cover the basic facts?

c. Did you provide specific details? Did you go above and beyond, really providing some amazing details?

d. Is the main idea clear? Do you have a strong, clear thesis? Is it supported throughout the essay?

e. Is the essay readable? Does it flow well?

f. Are there many grammar and spelling mistakes?

g. Was there a strong introduction that hooked the reader in?

h. How was the conclusion?

5. Make corrections:

Identify the places where you've made mistakes. Read through your essays and, using a **red/colored pen or pencil, add in any missing commas and circle any spelling mistakes.**

Foreign Language Checklist

Are you teaching your kids a foreign language in your homeschool? I put together a free checklist of topics and units you might want to cover... no matter which language your student is learning.

I thought it might be useful if I put together a checklist of units and topics you might want to cover as your child starts learning a new language.

By the time your kids are in middle school, you will want to think about adding a foreign language to your homeschool program. Research shows that it is considerably easier for children to pick up a language. In Europe, most students start learning a foreign language in primary school. Most have definitely started by the age of 10. When I taught in a gymnasium (grades 7-12 school) in Hungary, most of my students could speak one language fluently by 10th grade and were well on their way to becoming fluent in their second foreign language as well!

Most of us think of the languages that were offered when we were school: typically, Spanish, French and German. These days there are lots of other options as well: Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, Russian, Latin, Italian, and more. Another great option is ASL (American Sign Language). Many people don't realize that learning ASL will fulfill the requirements of a foreign language as well.

There are many options now to at least help students get started:

- Learn songs in the foreign language. (youtube has a lot of options!)
- Play games like bingo to help with vocabulary building
- Role play (Hello, My name is Joe Smith. What is your name? How old are you?)
- Online Programs and Apps can like Duolingo, Memrise, busuu, 24/7 Tutor
- Online Courses: There are lots of different options from courses with video lessons like homeschoolspanishcurriculum.com
- Programs such as Rosetta Stone or Pimsleur. (My sister used Rosetta Stone with her kids for German. I have a friend who had her daughter use Rosetta Stone for Spanish.) These programs did not work for our family when we started.
- Watch TV programs and movies in the foreign language. (This year, my kids have watched about 15 or 20 movies in German!) This helps students learn the rhythm and cadence of the language.

What if you don't have the skill and background to teach a foreign language?

- use an online program
- look for a homeschool class in your area (and ask around in your local homeschool community).
- see if you can trade expertise with another homeschooling parent who can help your kids learn a foreign language
- hire a tutor in person or find an online tutor

Foreign Language Checklist

	Topic	Comments/Notes
	Numbers First Words: hello, goodbye, yes, no, I speak _____. I don't speak _____. What is that? What does _____ mean? Stand up, Sit down, Listen (pay attention)	
	Greetings and Questions How are you? What is your name? My name is... How old are you? I am _____ years old.	
	Family Words Conversation /Role Play What's your name? How old are you? This is my brother/sister/etc. Possessive Pronouns	
	What is that? Do you have? Objects: Things around the room	
	Parts of the Body What do people look like (My brother has brown eyes.)	
	Clothes Colors The pants are blue. etc. Introduction to adjectives (grammar)	
	Animals Pets Wild Animals	
	Food Fruits and vegetables Meals Ordering Going shopping role play	

	House – Household Items	
	Time – Numbers	
	Weather, seasons, holidays What is the weather? What season is it? Over time we built up our vocabulary of fall words, winter words, spring words, summer words	
	Health and Illness I have a fever. I'm sick. Do you have a runny nose?	
	Daily routines getting up brushing teeth, eating breakfast going to bed etc.	
	Chores around the house Washing the dishes Doing the laundry Making the bed Vacuuming, etc.	
	Hobbies, activities Playing soccer, piano, chess Riding a bike, etc.	
	Verbs (Grammar) Regular vs. Irregular verbs	
	Country words, Farm City words, buildings Directions Traveling (airport, train station, transportation)	
	Jobs, occupations Student subjects in school	
	Vacation Role playing	

High School, Level Courses

This is a list of some of the type of courses available to students at the high school level. This is probably not a complete list but might be a starting point as you look towards homeschooling through high school.

High School Mathematics

- Algebra 1
- Geometry
- Algebra 2
- Trigonometry
- Pre-Calculus
- Calculus 1 & 2

English

- American literature
- British literature
- Contemporary literature
- Creative writing
- Communication skills
- Debate
- English language and composition
- English literature and composition
- Humanities
- Journalism
- Literary analysis

Science

- Agriculture
- Astronomy
- Biology
- Botany
- Chemistry
- Earth science
- Electronics
- Environmental science
- Environmental studies
- Forensic science
- Geology
- Marine biology
- Oceanography
- Physical science
- Physics
- Zoology

Other Courses

- Psychology

Business

- Accounting
- Business law
- Business management
- Consumer education
- Entrepreneurial skills
- Introduction to business
- Marketing
- Personal finance

Computer Science/Information Technology

- Animation
- App development
- Audio production
- Computer programming
- Computer repair
- Film production
- Graphic design
- Media technology
- Music production
- Typing
- Video game development
- Web design
- Web programming
- Word processing

If your student knows what college he/she is interested in, you might want to check out the kind of requirements needed for that college/university. Some schools require math through a certain level, two or four years of a foreign language, science courses such as biology, chemistry and physics and so forth. The earlier you look into college applications, the less stressful the process will be down the road!

Performing Arts

- Choir
- Concert band
- Dance
- Drama
- Guitar
- Jazz band
- Marching band
- Music theory
- Orchestra
- Percussion
- Piano
- Theater technology
- World music

Visual Arts

- 3-D art
- Art history
- Ceramics
- Digital media
- Drawing
- Film production
- Jewelry design
- Painting
- Photography
- Printmaking
- Sculpture

Vocational Education

- Auto body repair
- Auto mechanics
- Building construction
- Computer-aided drafting
- Cosmetology
- Criminal justice
- Driver education
- Electronics
- FFA
- Fire science
- Heating and cooling systems
- Hospitality and tourism
- JROTC
- Metalworking
- Networking
- Plumbing
- Production technology
- Refrigeration fundamentals
- Robotics
- Woodworking

Advanced Placement Courses

- US Government
- European History
- World History
- U.S. History
- Biology
- Calculus AB
- Calculus BC
- Chemistry
- Biology
- Environmental Science
- Human Geography
- Macroeconomics
- Microeconomics
- Statistics
- Computer Science
- Computer Science Principles
- Music Theory
- Art History
- Physics
- Psychology
- Foreign Languages (Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Latin, Spanish, Spanish Literature)

College-Level Courses

- American Government
- Beginning Algebra
- Biology
- Calculus
- Chemistry
- College Algebra
- Economics
- Macroeconomics
- Microeconomics
- Physics 1

SAT Subject Tests: Some colleges request/require certain SAT subject test. Every test is now a one-hour timed test; multiple choice questions. There are 20 SAT Subject Tests in five general subject areas: English, history, languages, mathematics and science.

[This is a list of the colleges that require, recommend and/or consider the SAT subject test.](#)

AP vs. CLEP exams –AP=prestige science or engineering, AP offers more suitable tests CLEP= Not as prestigious. No need for an expensive course. CLEP was designed with self-study in mind. Year-round testing available.

We are a team! If you have suggestions of subjects, topics or skills to add to this resource guide, please feel free to send me a note! You can always reach me by email here:

Liesl@homeschoolden.com

~Liesl