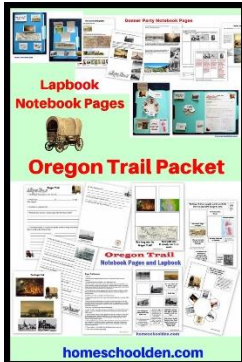
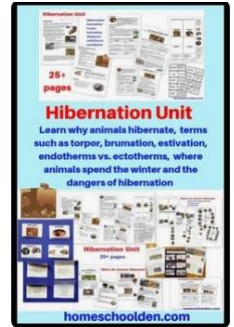
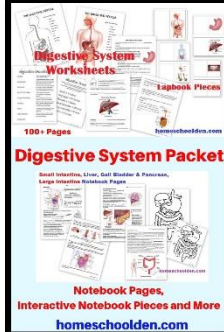
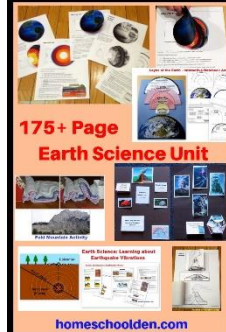


# HomeschoolDen.com

**Do you believe education can be exciting, inspiring, and full of joy? We do too!** I love the quote by William Butler Yeats, "Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire." It's about getting the kids involved, engaged, and fired up about learning (while juggling the rest of life too!)

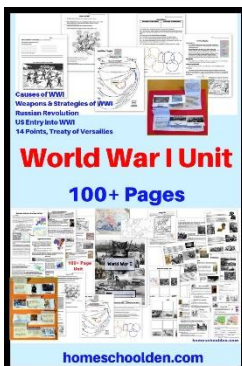
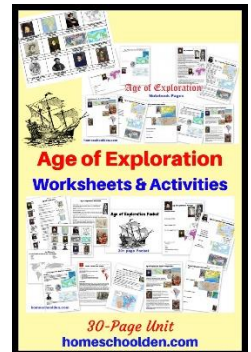
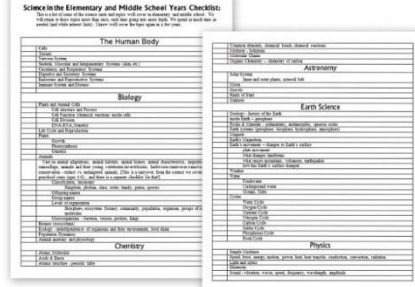
**Helpful Homeschool Resources:** You will find hundreds of resources over at our website! We have a free homeschool planning guide, a free daily/weekly homeschool planner, seasonal printables, notebook pages (from Genghis Khan to Natural Disasters and more!), packets and units, dozens of free grammar sheets (comma rules practice sheets, etc.), homeschool encouragement, teaching strategies, hands-on activity ideas and much more!



## FREE Science Unit Checklist

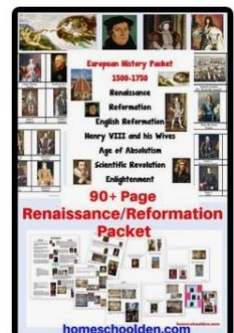
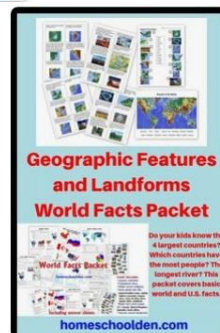
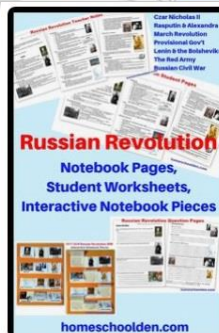
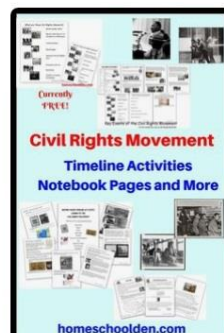
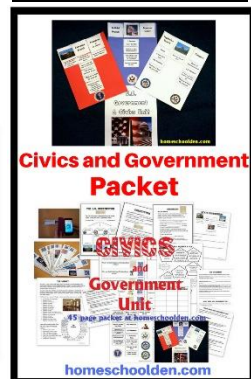
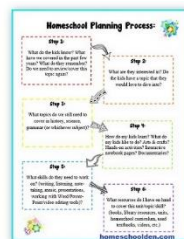
Science in the Elementary and Middle School Years  
**Homeschool Checklist**

[homeschoolden.com/  
science-units](http://homeschoolden.com/science-units)

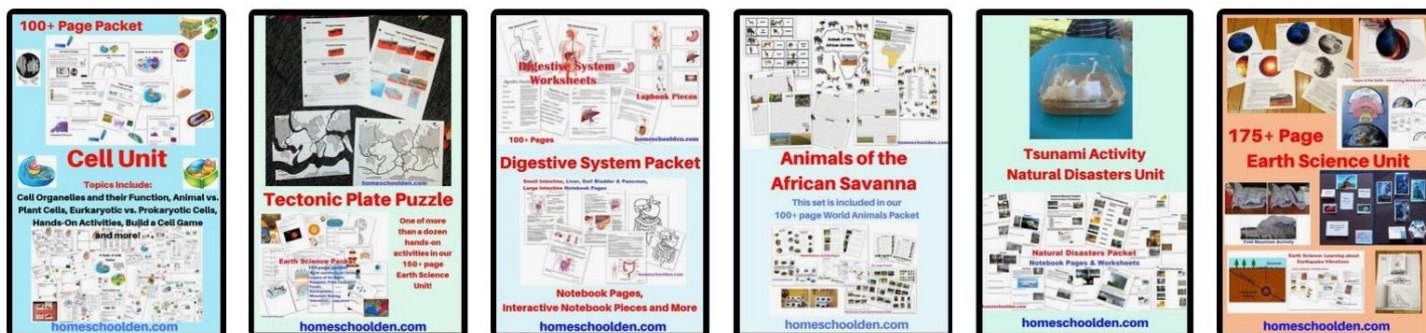


## FREE Homeschool Planners

**FREE**  
Homeschool Planning Guide





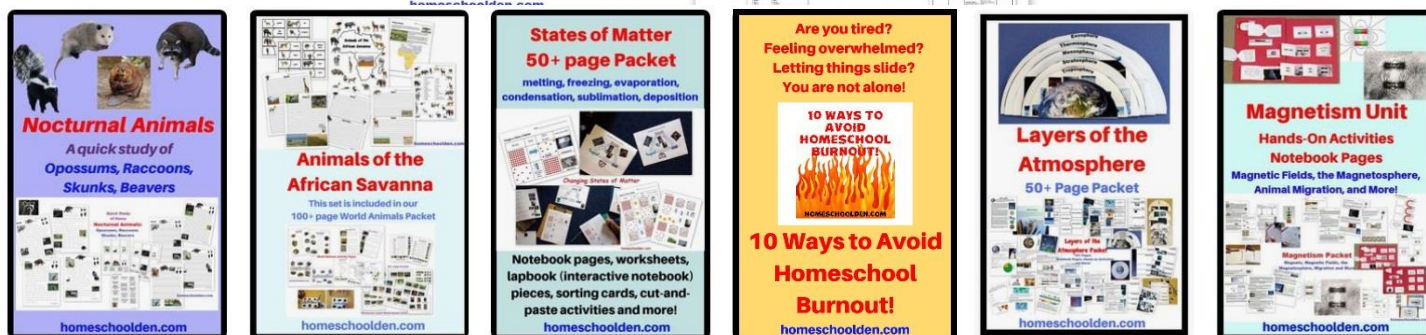


**Hands-On Homeschooling:** I love creating curriculum and love making things engaging and fun for the kids. Be sure to visit this hands-on activities page: [homeschoolden.com/hands-on-homeschool-activities/](http://homeschoolden.com/hands-on-homeschool-activities/) I shared TONS of pictures! (You'll find a free printable list of homeschool teaching strategies and activity ideas there.)



**Free Resource Guides:** These are FREE 35+ page resource guides that I put together to help answer some basic questions: What subjects should I teach my 2<sup>nd</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grader? Where do I start? How do I know what to teach my kids? These are some of the units and topics our family covered in these years. It might provide a starting point for those of you just starting your homeschool journey and may give you an idea or two if you've been at this homeschool thing for a while! We have resource guides for K-1, 2-3, 4-5 and 6-8.

[homeschoolden.com/new-to-our-blog-start-here](http://homeschoolden.com/new-to-our-blog-start-here)



**Our Store:** [homeschoolden.com/store](http://homeschoolden.com/store)

# HomeschoolDen.com

First, congratulations taking up homeschooling! I want to say that you're awesome! All homeschoolers need to high-five and encourage one another!! And, while I hope you find some inspiration and/or good ideas on our blog, take it all with a grain of salt... A blogger like me loves to write and share on good days and in good moments, but I can guarantee I'm shoving a mess aside to take pictures or (AND!!) not turning the camera to the laundry piles, paper piles, and so forth!

We all feel overwhelmed, inadequate and inexperienced at times because we're always dealing with a new phase in our kids' lives. I also wanted to say that our homeschool looks a lot more traditional/scheduled when I write some of our posts (especially those posts that condense three or four years of projects and activities into one post!!) ... but it isn't our reality. At times we have plans, but it all goes out the window. I know that's normal and then just try to jump back in the next day. I feel compelled to say all that because we all struggle to find our "groove" with homeschooling. Every family is on their own journey and I \*know\* you'll be awesome because no one knows your kids better than you do!!

## A Few Tips for Homeschooling Without Feeling Overwhelmed

1. **You are not alone!** We all have times when we feel inadequate, overwhelmed, or inexperienced... but think about the whole picture. You have amazing kids. They've already learned so much from you. You *can* do this!
2. **Stay positive** and focus on the small (and big) victories.
3. **Think about dinner** early in the day! I'm often pretty drained and tired by the evening. It feels great if that piece of my day is taken care of.
4. **Don't compare your reality to your thoughts, plans, and aspirations before the school year began.** In the quiet of summer, I often have (and make!) big plans. But, if we don't get to everything I planned over the course of the year, I just put it on the back burner for later!
5. Similarly, **don't compare your homeschool** to what you see on blogs, Facebook, Pinterest or even the stories you hear from friends. That's just a partial, incomplete glimpse of someone's day.
6. **Protect your time** – make sure you turn off the computer, say NO when you need to, let the answering machine pick up.
7. **Create a enthusiastic, supportive atmosphere:** Focus on having an enjoyable learning experience together... which means feel free to stray from the curriculum, follow rabbit holes, and spend an entire day focusing on something unexpected but engaging to the kids! That's when true learning really takes place!
8. **Aim Small:** It's easy to worry about the big picture, but for me I need to focus on just one week at a time. We \*love\* hands-on activities, so I try to plan out just one or two for the week. I look forward to those moments when the kids are \*excited\* and \*engaged\* so I really try to make sure those happen. Find what excites and motivates you and your kids and add in just one or two a week. It could be anything from [lapbooks](#) to experiments, reading together to field trips.
9. **You are never behind!** There is no one that says that the kids \*have\* to have gained mastery of a certain skill or learned a certain topic/subject by a certain grade or age. You are on a long journey together.
10. **Get help when you can:** Enlist help from your spouse, the kids, extended family. Hire teenage help. Think about joining a co-op (but don't feel obligated!)
11. **Plans are not engraved in stone:** If you need to end a unit early, change curriculum, stop reading a novel half-way through, do a unit later (I can't tell you how many times we've had to do this!), take time off... Do it!
12. **Remember all the reasons why you started homeschooling.** Feel confident in your choice. You didn't make this choice lightly or frivolously. You took the plunge because you believed it was the right thing to do at this point in time. It will be challenging. It will be hard. You'll have a lot to juggle. But it will also be rewarding, memorable and full of surprises along the way!
13. **It all boils down to LOVE!** Love your kids. Love your time together. Cherish each other. Build memories. Nurture and care for your family. And love learning along the way.



# Don't let any of these ruin your homeschool day...



**Comparison** – Every homeschool is unique. Don't worry about what your friends are doing. Don't feel like your homeschool has to incorporate every project on Pinterest. Don't compare someone's best day to your worst day. Remember that when someone tells you about their homeschool day or writes about homeschooling online they are probably not telling the whole story! Know that there were parts of their day that did not go as planned. Parts of their day they wish had gone differently!

**Letting time be eaten away** – Make sure you have some clear boundaries for yourself and the kids – about electronics, answering the phone, doing one more chore, putting away just one more dish. If you sit down at the computer, time is very likely to slip by too quickly. You don't want to glance up and notice that an hour has gone by. Dishes will wait, you can return a phone call in an hour. Be mindful and protect your homeschool time.

**Being a slave to the curriculum** — There are times when a particular curriculum won't work. Remember, no curriculum is perfect. A curriculum might work well with one child and not with another. Don't be afraid to ditch the curriculum and turn to something different.

And on that same note, don't feel like you have to cover "everything" in a certain time-frame. No matter what, there will be holes in your kids' education. Remember, you are helping them develop skills for life-long learning. If they don't cover a certain topic, they will be just fine!

Curriculum plans and guidelines are just that... You can't really be "behind" if your kids are learning and growing, so take your time covering the material, take those field trips.

**Expecting perfection** – The kids are going to bicker, fight, be tired, be moody. You are going to feel sluggish, unmotivated, anxious... All of this is normal!! Be kind to yourself and take some time to really know what your triggers are... Are you less patient when you don't get enough sleep? Then make sleep a priority if you can. Does it bother you when the kids fight over silly things... Try to anticipate the situations where they are likely to argue and get a set routine in place to try to avoid those.

**Thinking you can do it all** – Sometimes we get grand visions in our head that we'll wake to baked bread every morning, dishes will be whisked away magically, the kids will be *begging* for the next amazing lesson... Ahh... wouldn't that be nice? The reality is there is lot of give and take in homeschooling.

Homeschooling is a full-time job and when you add in all the other demands on our time... well, it's definitely a challenge to get it all done. Remember, when you choose to do one thing, you have made a choice NOT to do something else. Keep that in mind with all the plates you'll be spinning this year!