

HOME SCHOOL HELPER

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Negotiating the College Admission Process

Preparing for college is a challenging task for all teens and their families, but for homeschool young people the process can be even more demanding.

Planning a college-prep course of study is critical, but so is the documentation of the work for prospective colleges. In fact, the college admission process itself is an important step to your child's successful transition to post-high school studies. Don't let college admission requirements take you by surprise. Plan ahead as you help your child negotiate the process.

According to the National Center for Home Education, the majority of colleges and universities have a homeschool admissions policy,

and some have an admissions officer dedicated specifically to homeschool students. The application process varies from school to school, so one of the first steps in your plan needs to be the selection of the college and early contact with the admissions office. Before applying you should ask for details about the college's homeschool admission policy and whether the school has homeschool students currently enrolled. You want to be sure that the school will review your child's application before you attempt the admissions process and pay the required fees.



The Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) has conducted extensive research on college admissions policies nationwide. The results show that, although more and more homeschool students are succeeding in getting into state-funded universities, public colleges aren't as open to homeschool grads as are private colleges. Private schools have more freedom than do state-funded schools in administering their admissions policies. Although HSLDA continues to lobby for nondiscriminatory practices in public college admissions policies, many schools lack clear criteria and flexibility in their current admissions procedures.

What does all that mean for you and your college-bound teen? Know that each college evaluates homeschool grads differently, and consider first the schools that are friendly to homeschool students. Recognize that if your child chooses a school that currently enrolls few or no homeschool grads, you should be prepared for an admissions battle to see your child accepted. In any case, the following list outlines the basic requirements for typical college admission.

College-Prep Course Material

Colleges expect competence in key college preparatory coursework. You need to be prepared to document completion of four years of college-prep math studies, three-to-four years of lab science, four years of English studies (with emphasis on literature and

composition), three-to-four years of history/social studies (American history, world history, government/economics), and two years of a foreign language.

If you belong to an organization that helps produce transcripts and offers a high school diploma (such as The Academy of Home Education, which is under the auspices of Bob Jones University [<http://www.bjupress.com/services/ahe/>]), then this documentation is easier to demonstrate. However, there are other ways to show academic competence.

Preparing Transcript Records

You should design your transcript for the convenience of admissions directors who review hundreds of records from prospective students. You'll want it to be clear, easily accessible, and simple yet thorough. The records should include only grades nine through twelve. Remember that only courses using high school-level textbooks can count for high school credit. You also want to continue academically rigorous classes through the last year of high school—schools



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don't want to see an "easy" load for that last year before college admission. The transcript should include the grade level and grade for each course as well as your grading scale. Calculate and report a yearly and cumulative grade point average. Translate the courses into credits earned, usually based on the time spent on the course (9 weeks = $\frac{1}{4}$ credit; 18 weeks = $\frac{1}{2}$ credit; 36 weeks = 1 credit).

Feel free to include work experiences, work-study, internships, or apprenticeships as elective courses. You will need to provide a short description of each nontraditional course you use for high school credit. Keep the explanation to one or two sentences.

Whether or not you have a graduation ceremony, you'll want to include a specific graduation date on the transcript. The

prospective college will want to know when the student has completed all preparatory studies.

The college may also request a bibliography of high school literature and a sample essay to evaluate the student's background and thinking skills.

Many colleges require a college admissions letter from the applicant explaining why he wants to attend the particular college as well as his view of his qualifications. This letter of explanation can go far to show the admissions officer your child's readiness for college and his fitness for the school of his choice. If the college looks for such a letter, the application form will say so. Your child's letter should supply only the information

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BJU: A Homeschool-Friendly Environment

Did you know that approximately 25% of Bob Jones University's student body is made up of homeschool graduates? Prospective students or their parents may speak with an admissions counselor by calling 1-800-BJ-AND-ME. Your counselor will be happy to answer any questions you may have about BJU and/or the admissions process. Or, if you prefer, go to <http://www.bju.edu/admissions/> for information first.

After that, what items does the BJU Admissions Office ask potential students to provide?

- **Three character recommendations**
- **A high school transcript:** A copy of your transcript should be sent directly to the BJU Admissions Office. Since standardized testing results are required, it is very important that this information be included with the transcript.
- **American College Test:** If you have not taken the test, you should do so in advance if at all possible. For the necessary registration

materials, contact the American College Testing Program, PO Box 414, Iowa City, IA 52243—or register online at www.actstudent.org. If you have taken the test but have not had your scores sent to the BJU Admissions Office, please contact ACT Records, PO Box 451, Iowa City, IA 52243 or request them online at www.actstudent.org. BJU's code number is 3836.

- **Enrollment Information Form:** This form, supplied by BJU, provides additional information in order to adequately set up your records.
- **Statement of Church Involvement:** BJU also provides this form, which includes questions about your church attendance, salvation testimony, and so on.

When all of the information has been received, the Admissions Committee will make its decision concerning your enrollment. We look forward to seeing you at BJU!

What Happened to the “Story” in History?

Paul Revere races through the New England countryside warning of the British advance. Napoleon attempts to subdue Russia and loses an army of 600,000 men.

Athenian culture hosts philosophies, sciences, and political innovations.

These remarkable moments and developments in history helped shape future countries and civilizations. There are many such accounts from all over the world and in all eras. They excite the mind and stir the heart. Why, then, are so few students caught up in history? There are reasons.

Major textbook publishers have discarded the narrative, or story, of history. Their texts dole out historical events three paragraphs at a time and then immediately redirect the student’s attention to several pages of activities. Such fragmentation sacrifices both continuity and understanding. The student has no opportunity to become engrossed in an event, a movement, or a battle. If anything, he is persuaded that history occurred in spurts of stand-alone factoids.

Some of the fault lies with historians who claim that narrative accounts are, by definition, incomplete. There is truth in this argument. However, no historian wants to or can use all of the facts related to a

subject. If his topic is Paul Revere’s ride, the historian will not care what the British soldiers ate for breakfast. Important to the story is that they did march, that their goal was to capture the colonists’ arsenal, and that Paul Revere, among others, perceived this as a threat and began his cross-country gallop. A reasonably complete and understandable story can be told without all the facts. What will make this historical narrative incomplete is a lack of description, analysis, and explanation, all of which are frequently sacrificed in the three-paragraph presentation.

A recent concern of writers and publishers is that of being politically correct. In history it often means that all known groups—cultural, ethnic, religious, and political—are equally important in all events at all times and should be included in every narrative.



This clutters history books with extraneous material that somehow has to be made to seem important. Neither the French nor the American Indians had any influence on Paul Revere's ride, nor did his journey immediately affect them. Their stories can be developed in appropriate contexts.

Finally, the more radical historians claim that narration oversimplifies history or even distorts it by bringing actions or events together that were not seen as related by the original actors. Furthermore, they argue that because the past no longer exists, it cannot be resurrected with any assurance of truth. With the past forever gone, the best anyone can write is interesting fiction.

If history cannot be reconstructed, is it any wonder that publishers perceive that activities about the past are better than the history?

How should these affect the choice of a history text? Teachers and administrators need not be at the mercy of either publisher or interest group. In evaluating a history book, look for a narrative in which the historian selected actions and occurrences

important and appropriate to his subject and placed them into a logical time frame. Next, connections between people, their actions, and subsequent events must be explained to show and support the unity of the account. A good narrative will also attempt to understand events as did the individuals of the period and to explain their attitudes and actions.

What will make this historical narrative incomplete is a lack of description, analysis, and explanation.

When, after consideration, a suitable history textbook is found, compare the number of pages of text to the number of pages of activities. Then, read only the history pages. If each of these pages stands alone or is poorly connected with the others, look for another textbook.

To those who claim that writing history is akin to producing a work of fiction, Christians should remember that references to time past abound in Scripture. Jesus Himself frequently quoted from the Old Testament. If history were fiction, the Lord's referral to the past would be meaningless, an exercise in futility. Furthermore, many books of the Bible are books of history. They are narratives with a beginning, a middle, and an end. They have unity and a purpose. The history textbooks put before students should aspire to the same high standards.

Additional Reading

Carr, Edward H. *What Is History?* New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963.

Dray, William H. *Philosophy of History*, 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1993. Chapter 5 "The Nature and Role of Narrative."

Gilderhus, Mark T. *History and Historians*, 6th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2007.

Thompson, Willie. *Postmodernism and History*. NY: Macmillan, 2004. Chapter 4 "Representation, Narrative and Employment," Chapter 6 "Representation and Relativism, Cognitive and Moral."

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requested. If the admissions department wants to know more, it will ask.

Most colleges prefer online applications, which can be processed more quickly and will prompt you if you are missing information.

College Entrance Tests

Most colleges require either the SAT or the ACT. You can register easily online for either test, but mail-in applications are also available at local high schools, community colleges, or sometimes even the public library. Check with the college to see which test it requires and the scores it expects. Your child may take these tests several times, and most colleges will consider the best results.

Note that you don't want your student to attempt the test until he has completed high school algebra and geometry, both of which require skills included on the tests. The new SAT also includes some advanced math and trigonometry. Most colleges use a combination of the test scores and high school grades to make enrollment decisions; the higher the test score, the less critical the course GPA. The significance of the test scores varies from school to school.

For information about achievement testing as well as a variety of other assessments and test preparation materials, contact BJU Press Testing & Evaluation at www.bjupress.com/services/testing.

Recommendations

Most colleges require a letter of recommendation from a teacher as a character reference. Since your child's primary teachers are his parents or other close relatives, he will need to seek a recommendation from at least one unrelated

adult who knows your child well but who will be viewed as unbiased. This person could be a work supervisor or employer, a teacher from an elective course (music instructor or sports coach), a pastor, or a youth leader. It needs to be someone in a leadership position who has known the applicant for a significant period of time and who can offer information about your child's character and abilities.

College Interview

If your child is at all uneasy about his admissions prospects, you may want to consider seeking interviews with the admissions officers. If research reveals that the college of choice does not have a history of regularly accepting homeschool applicants, your student may want to present his application in person. A personal meeting will allow the officer to get a more accurate impression of the student, and a positive impression will make it harder for the officer to deny admission.

Since each college evaluates homeschool grads differently, consider first the schools that are friendly to homeschool students.

Of course, these tips address the college admissions process generally. Keep in mind that each college is different, and each homeschool's situation is different as well. Remain flexible; keep on top of dates and deadlines—and serve in a supporting role as your child plans his future.

Dr. Rhonda Galloway teaches English at Bob Jones University. She has been a featured speaker at both state and national homeschool conferences.

Salt Recipe

Christians worried about the state of our culture often look for political and legal solutions. Others hope to turn things around by getting involved with the media and the entertainment industry. But culture begins at home.

Studies have long shown that the chances of a child growing up to become a criminal plummet to almost zero if he is raised by two loving parents. Two-parent families are also the most effective anti-poverty program.

One factor in the development in male homosexuality, according to Christian psychologists, is the absence of a father figure. The boy so yearns for a father's love that he becomes attracted to men. The effect of absent or emotionally distant fathers on daughters is that they so yearn for a father's love that they often become promiscuous.

I hasten to reassure single moms that none of these dire consequences necessarily come to pass. Christians, especially, have God's promise to the fatherless that "I will be a father to you" (2 Corinthians 6:18).

But Christians who want to strike a mighty blow in the culture wars would do well to build up their own families. Spouses must spend quantity time with each other. When they are both busy in their own separate spheres, they tend to become isolated. Married couples work to counter these effects by building time in their lives to spend with each other.



Parents must spend quantity time with their children.

Many children spend more time with their peers than with their parents, which means they are essentially raised by their friends. If the statistic is true that the average father spends seven minutes a day with his children, he is not doing his job.

Often churches are part of the problem, with so many activities that add to the busyness of the week rather than encouraging members to devote time to their families.

Christians also need to recover the joy of family life, not a spirit of harshness, with the father trying to rule with an iron fist and the mother controlling her children with rigid rules and severe punishment. Ironically, this approach can spark the opposite of what is intended, breeding marital discord and turning children into rebels.

A revival of the Christian family would have far-reaching cultural ramifications. A network of strong and happy families would help stabilize American culture. They would also provide a powerful Christian witness to the cultural casualties who, on the deepest level, yearn for a family like that.

Dr. Gene Edward Veith Jr. is the former cultural editor at *WORLD* magazine and is the author of seventeen books.

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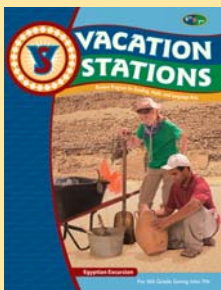


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What's New!

ELEMENTARY LEVEL



Vacation Stations—Take your rising seventh grader on an *Egyptian Excursion* as he reads for comprehension and reviews fractions, decimals, ratios, proportions, and geometric figures. Proofreading, word analysis, parts of speech, sentence structure, and diagramming are also reviewed.

Student Worktext (233502, \$19.00)

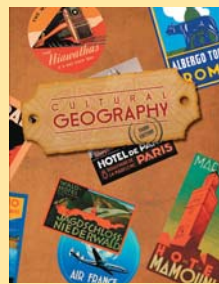
JOURNEYFORTH



Gunner's Run by Rick Barry—World War II has taken nineteen-year-old Jim Yoder far away from his home, his country, and his pretty friend Margo. But when he finds himself running for his life across Nazi Germany, Jim discovers that to survive, he will have to trust the God he once rejected.

(244012, \$8.99)

SECONDARY LEVEL



Cultural Geography (3rd ed.)—Surveying both geographic principles and every country of the world through a regional approach, your student “travels” from continent to continent around the world studying the cultures, land forms, climates, resources, economy, religions, and government of each country.

Student Text (231514, \$42.00)



French 1 (2nd ed.)—The step-by-step approach to learning grammar builds on previously learned principles as the student progresses. The student learns greetings, verb conjugations, basic survival vocabulary, pronunciation rules, grammatical structures, and cultural highlights.

Student Text (185884, \$38.50)