

Catching Up Kids Who are Behind

Typical high school credit suggestions:

Non-college bound student – 22 total

Math – 3 years

English – 4 years

Social Studies – 4 years

Science - 2 years

Computer – 1 + year

Fine Arts – 1.5 – 3 years

Health - .5 year

Physical Ed. - 1.5 years

Career/Technology – 1 year

Electives to meet or exceed credit requirements

For college bound – 24 total

Math – 3 – 4 yrs

English – 4+ yrs

Social Studies – 4 +

Science – 3+

Computers 1+

Foreign Lang. 2 – 3 yrs

Fine Arts 1.5 – 2 yrs

Health - .5 year

Physical Ed. 1/5 yrs

Electives to meet or exceed credit requirements

Tips to Make it Happen

Narrative presentation is typically easier to remember than a textbook type presentation. Find a real book by a good author to address subjects whenever possible.

Be ruthless in weeding out subjects that aren't essential for success in life, i.e. Haiku poetry, Chinese history, diagramming sentences, etc.

Use simpler texts to teach unfamiliar subjects in a 'just the facts maam' way.

Try covering a subject in depth and then move to the next subject, rather than covering a little of everything every day – more like a college schedule.

Capitalize on their interests, i.e. use texts on something they are interested in to teach research skills, outlining, etc.

If the student has mastered something, stop teaching it and move to something else!

Forget where you expected them to be by this time and accept reality without bitterness.

Work backwards from the goal to determine what MUST be addressed and what realistically CAN be addressed.

Don't be bound to a traditional scope and sequence. Determine the best course of study for this child, not the average child. Texas law only requires reading, spelling, grammar, math and good citizenship – covered at appropriate levels at appropriate grades.

Give academic credit for outside activities – think about what skills they're obtaining.

In Literature – use Spark Notes or Cliff Notes BEFORE they read.

Catching Up Kids Who Are Behind - Resources

Study Skills

-*How to be a Superstar Student* DVD's from The Great Courses (www.thegreatcourses.com)
-- someone else is delivering the subject matter and it might be more readily received.

Language Arts

-*Wordly Wise* or *Worldly Wise 3000*– use for vocabulary AND spelling words. Student interacts with same words in a variety of ways for one week. At the end of the week, spelling comes more naturally than by rote memorization – it's connected with the meaning of the words.

-*Movies as Literature* by Kathryn Stout – explores literary terms via classic movies, rather than written text. After this initial introduction, can more easily transition to text.

-*Jensen's Format Writing* – concentrate on expository writing, as it's the only one typically used as an adult

-*Reading Detective RX* (Critical Thinking Books and Software) – comprehension 'tools'

-Consider anthologies for exposure to shorter versions of great, classic stories that might not otherwise be covered due to lack of time. Old editions of these anthologies are good because they usually are well written, like Childcraft *How and Why Library Scientists and Inventors, Pioneers and Patriots, People to Know*, etc. (These can pretty easily be found at

Goodwill, and certainly from online used book sources. The old, old ones have illustrations that aren't too childish – mostly line drawings.)

Other examples of more current anthologies with classic stories are William Bennet's *Moral Compass, Book of Virtues*, John McCain's *Character is Destiny*. These have lots of white space on the page, the selections are relatively short, the reading level isn't high school, and the books themselves aren't too intimidating.

Science

"Exploring the World of..." Series by Tiner– more narrative based than typical textbooks.

God's Design for Heaven & Earth series by Answers In Genesis -- really just contains the essentials that a literate adult would know.

Everything You Need to Know about Science Homework by Scholastic Homework Reference Series as a reference for 'must know' topics.

Math

Pre-algebra courses are usually good review courses, but are light on 'teaching' the subject (Teaching Textbooks is good because it gets mom out of the picture, but it's still light in the teaching area.)

Key to series (Fractions, Decimals, Percents, Algebra, Geometry, and Metric Measurement) Algebra and Geometry wouldn't be appropriate for a complete college prep course. These are self-teaching, non-intimidating, and cover these subjects in an incremental manner to arrive at mastery. In my opinion, an *understanding* of fractions, decimals, percents and measurement is a vital life skill! A calculator is great, but you have to know what to put in where! (www.keycurriculum.com)

History/Geography

Everything you Need to Know about...Homework by Scholastic Homework Reference Series. Different ones cover American History, World History, and Geography (I use these to determine what the 'big ticket items' are that my kids should know. The grade range listed on the books merely indicates that these topics are being introduced to students during those grades. They will be re-introduced and explored in more depth in subsequent years.

Our family loves the Landmark series of historical books and we use them with the above Scholastic guides as a timeline. These were published in the 50's through 70's and are written by well respected authors. They are not historical fiction, rather incredibly interesting and accurate accounts of particular episodes of history. There is a series devoted to US History and one devoted to World History

They give a much more in-depth treatment of a particular topic than a textbook. Most of them are out of print, but a few have been reprinted. You can find lists of them online, find the title of one you wish to read, and use interlibrary loan. Used copies are easily found online.

Misc. Resources

Lifepac Select Electives by Alpha Omega Publications is a good resource for computer based subjects from American Literature to Health to Civics to Earth Science to GED Prep—targeted to either grades 7 – 12 or 9 – 12. This means the content is delivered in such a way as to be understandable for the lowest grade listed. Print versions are also available in the form of LifePacs.

Things targeted to the adult population with learning challenges or ESL resources are often very friendly to our older kids, as they typically lack childish pictures, childish subject matter, grade level distinctions printed on the cover, etc. Check out www.NewReadersPress.com.

A good source for old books (or any used book) is www.abe.com. I often find it cheaper than the ‘used’ option you find when you look up a new book on Amazon.

Home-Designed High School – Diana Johnson – gives traditional scope and sequence and helpful ideas for a traditional high school plan (bear in mind that this likely won’t fit our kids who are behind, but it gives you ideas from which to personalize your student’s school experience)

Home Learning Year by Year – Rebecca Rupp – traditional scope and sequence (same caveat as above!)