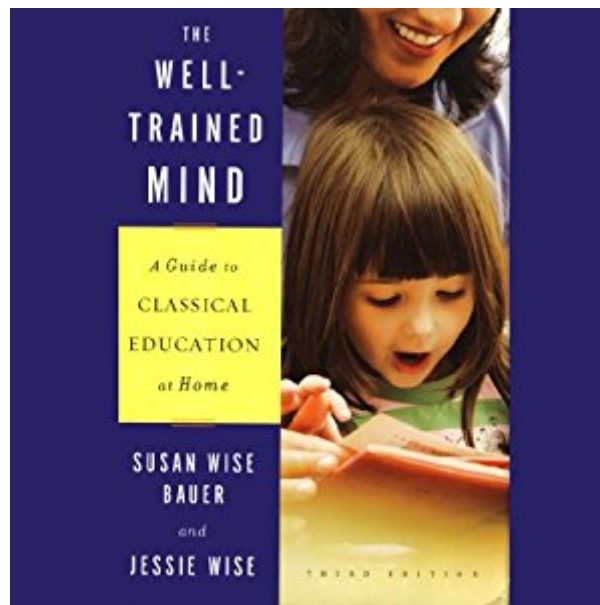


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The Well-Trained Mind: A Guide To Classical Education At Home (Third Edition)



Synopsis

The Well-Trained Mind will instruct you, step by step, on how to give your child an academically rigorous, comprehensive education from preschool through high school - one that will train him or her to read, to think, to understand, to be well-rounded and curious about learning. Veteran home educators Jessie Wise and Susan Wise Bauer outline the classical pattern of education called the trivium, which organizes learning around the maturing capacity of the child's mind and comprises three stages: the elementary school "grammar stage," the middle school "logic stage," and the high school "rhetoric stage." Using this theory as your model, you'll be able to instruct your child in all levels of reading, writing, history, geography, mathematics, science, foreign languages, rhetoric, logic, art, and music, regardless of your own aptitude in those subjects. This newly revised edition contains completely updated ordering information for all curricula and books, new and expanded curricula recommendations, new material on using computers and distance-learning resources, answers to common questions about home education, information about educational support groups, and advice on practical matters such as working with your local school board, preparing a high school transcript, and applying to colleges.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Wow... some funny reviews below. I bought this book on the recommendation of a friend whose homeschooled Kindergartner loves learning and has been reading for close to two years. I've been an English teacher for ten years and have grown increasingly disenchanted with both public and private schools; I've watched bright, creative, passionate young people have the love of learning

sucked out of them by a flawed and over-burdened system, or, worse, fall between the cracks because they have learning differences, despite the fact that they have amazing minds. To the readers who assert that this book is for rigid, obsessive parents, I would urge them to read it again. It's not about rigidity, but about fostering excellence, which does take some hard work. I'm sure that this style of homeschooling is not for every child and every family, but it provides hundreds of resources, and I think there's something here for everyone. Granted, if you're not interested in a Classical approach, you may want to look elsewhere. But I would urge you to consider it, even if it sounds foreign or daunting. And now for my snotty asides: the reviews that are rife with spelling and grammar errors, and insist that the methods in this book are too demanding for children, are a bit hard to take seriously, you know? Other reviews are clearly written by parents who are intimidated because of how little education they themselves have... but the wonderful thing about homeschooling is that you get to learn WITH your children. It should be exciting to you, and if it's scary to confront all of the science, math, history and literature that you don't know, so much the better! Don't we want to teach our children to seek knowledge, and to try things that are difficult? And what better way to do that than to model it ourselves? If you are a lifelong learner, your children will be too. I have the greatest respect for those deeply religious Christians who indicated that while this book has much to offer, it's lacking in religious education, and they make up for on their own with Biblical study, many of whom include Biblical languages in said study. I have less respect for the reviewers who are worried that the lessons of "those evil Pagan Greeks" will teach their children to question. Here's my favorite quote from a reviewer below: "I pray God will open the blind eyes of those lusting after intellectualism (note the spelling error) and lead them to True Wisdom of God! What good is Homer and Shakespeare to the soul?" "What good is Homer and Shakespeare to the soul!?! Don't you actually mean What good ARE Homer and Shakespeare to the soul? I don't even know how to begin to answer that. It's a clear case of "If you have to ask..." I begin to see why literacy rates amongst the middle class are declining, and most high school students will never take Calculus. Buy the book if you're a homeschooler or teacher interested in educating thoughtful, interesting, interested critical thinkers.

My kids are in public schools, and I'm using WTM to do a home enrichment program. Kids are 6 and 9. I give this 4.5 stars. As this is well-reviewed, and I agree with most of the positive reviews, I'll start with my one big CON. The recommendations for early science curriculum are straight-up garbage. My husband is a science professor at an Ivy, and I have a strong STEM background. While I appreciate the idea behind connecting the science and history curriculum, it doesn't really work from

a education standpoint. Kids are terrific observers at this early age, but less good at abstract thought. IMO, the Montessori curriculum is far stronger at utilizing a child's basic kinesthetic and observational strengths. The author here recommends starting with bio, then earth science, then chemistry, then physics. IMO, it should work in the opposite direction. Of these topics, physics and chemistry are the ones that lend themselves most to observation and concrete work. Chemistry, inasmuch as external observation reflects things like "atoms" and other abstract ideas, is less appropriate than physics. Compare these to the body (for example), where there are few experiments you can reasonably execute. A child must take on faith that what she is learning is real. If one were learning merely about science history (which is also appropriate), then the author's choices would make more sense. But it's perhaps one of the most foundational aspects of education to learn how to ask, observe, and understand. Something like simple machines, basic forces and motion, etc., lend themselves far better to experimentation and learning by observing. I do like the recommendations for memory-work. (I will say, this is hardly unique to WTM. The only early-education science curriculum that really addresses this issue is Montessori. So, I only take off half a star for it.) Outside of that critique, I found the book very adaptable and useful. Some things that others haven't talked about as much:- The book is optimistic about learning. The author presumes children learn, and the book imbued me with confidence in my ability to teach my children, and for them to learn some pretty complicated things. I'd probably be considered a relatively educated person, but I recognize some holes in my education, and in some cases, I've been learning along with my kids. She suggests lots of curriculum that can be bought, but also gives great recommendations for using free and cheap resources. Overall, there's a sense of "I can do this" about the book. She is honest, however, that this is an assertive program, pretty much the opposite of unschooling, and it's information-led rather than child-led.- The book does a good job of sorting out religious v. secular resources. I'm a Christian myself, as is the author, but I'm not evangelical, and I prefer my church-learning to be separate. There are so many homeschool resources now, that it's not always easy to find. She seems often to prefer Christian resources, but she always makes note of it, and gives secular alternatives.- The author IMO correctly understands that the act of reading, the act of writing, composition, and other language arts, do not always develop on the same time-line. I like that she talks about separating these, so that a child struggling with the act of writing will not necessarily be held back in narration and composition, etc. I have a son with high-functioning ADHD, and her suggestions helped unpack his dislike of composition as an issue of handwriting rather than composition.- While this book has a reputation as being somewhat strict and inflexible, I didn't find it that way, perhaps because I went into it intending to

adapt the materials to my own use. My impression of her philosophy is that it's important for children to develop confidence with language and math, and, especially as to language, that leaning on audio-visual material is a mistake. I suspect her feeling is that it's easy to get lazy about this, or to forget that at the end of the day, children must have confidence with the written word. Personally, I occasionally use online interactive materials and very occasionally use documentaries for the history curriculum, but only AFTER beginning with reading and talking. Once I feel like my kids have a strong connection to the material, I don't mind letting them increase their knowledge by watching a documentary. I don't think the author's point is that videos are terrible, only that children need to work toward confidence with language as a primary source of information. In my family, serious restriction of media means that my kids view media as a treat rather than a meal. Finally, I found this book useful for my needs as a part-timer. I don't use that many of the resources she suggests, but I've used the overall structure and organization of material. I was a bit overwhelmed before I read this, in terms of not feeling like I could be thorough, particularly with history and language arts. As to history, I did end up using the author's history series (which is excellent, with some qualifications), and used her suggested literature list (tied to the history series), which has been excellent. For math, I used the information she gave on math programs to choose a program that she did not suggest.. but her suggestions made it easier to figure out what I cared about for math systems. Overall, outside the science chapter, I think this is a useful book. It gives a sense of scope, and has a lot of information on what sorts of choices you might make.

My daughter is home-schooling her daughters and after a year of difficulty finding a curriculum that she liked, she settled on the classic education outlined by Susan Wise Bauer. Then she brought me on board too. I am a credentialed teacher and have agreed whole-heartedly that her girls, especially her eldest who has ADHD, would do better in a one-on-one environment than lost in the hubbub of the classroom. And I understood her disgust with the Common Core curriculum taught here in California. Even the Catholic School is under it's sway. So when she found this book and read it, she urged me to read it too. I am really, really impressed. This education reminds me of my own in the 1950's public schools. Except it is more thorough and better thought out. And after implementing Susan Wise Bauer's outlines and suggestions of classical reading material, old-fashioned narrative writing, and memorization I am so pleased to see my granddaughter thriving! She loves her half to one hour of reading each day and she enjoys memorizing poems and reciting to her parents and grandparents. Even her math [her poorest subject] is making great headway. If you are considering or in the midst of home schooling and doubting yourself, this is the book for you. Susan Wise Bauer

is an expert and she will lead you step-by-step through each grade, outlining what to do, what to say, how to teach each and every subject necessary for your child to receive the kind of education that you decided you wanted for your child when you began schooling them at home.

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