



### What is Literature-based learning?

Sonlight Curriculum is unique compared to most other homeschooling companies because we include so much high-quality literature in our [homeschool curriculum](#). Where others choose to rely on textbooks and other educational media, we opt for great books and delightful stories that will capture children's imaginations and instruct them at the same time.

But why would we choose to rely on literature instead of other "tried-and-true" materials? Is literature really all that much better?

## Three Reasons to Use a Literature-Rich Approach to Home Education

We believe a [literature-rich homeschool curriculum](#) is ideal for a homeschooling environment because:

### 1. Literature conveys information in an enjoyable format.

One of the most famous lines from the classic movie *Mary Poppins* was, "A spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down."

That's how we feel about literature. It takes valuable information and knowledge — that may be rather bland on its own — and wraps it up in an "easy-to-swallow" story.

Think back to your childhood for a moment. Do you remember the books your mother and father read to you? *The Cat in the Hat*, *Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel*, *The Berenstain Bears*, *The Poky Little Puppy*... ?

Do you remember the books you read by yourself, after you "graduated" from read-aloud time? Nonfiction books about dinosaurs, airplanes, and horses... Fiction books like *Frog and Toad*, *Make Way for Ducklings*, *Homer Price*, *Old Yeller*... Can you picture them... remember the stories... recall the characters?

If you answered yes, I'm not surprised. Most of us remember in vivid detail many of our favorite childhood books. In fact, it's not at all uncommon for us to want our kids to read the same books we read as children.

In those books you read as a child, you gained valuable insights, practical information, exposure to various cultures, and a desire to acquire — or avoid — certain character qualities. There was literally a world of knowledge and experience right at your fingertips. And you wanted to enter that world... and enjoyed it when you visited.



## 2. Literature conveys information in a form that is easy to remember.

Facts and figures devoid of context are difficult to remember. That's why a lot of memory systems rely on mnemonics and other memory tricks to memorize raw data.

But put those same facts and figures into a story — give them context — and all of a sudden, it's easy to remember the information! Stories serve as anchors for facts and figures that would otherwise be lost in the great sea of information in your mind.

## 3. Literature encourages you to interact with your kids.

Many parents struggle to get their kids to talk to them. But when you use literature as the foundation of your homeschool curriculum, you'll find it's much easier to spark conversations. *Good* conversations. *Significant* conversations.

When you use a [literature-rich homeschool program](#) like Sonlight Curriculum, you'll read aloud to your children. As you do, your children will ask questions about the story, about the characters, about words they may not have encountered before.

You'll have a chance to reply to your children's questions. And from time to time you may find that your children's questions lead to entire conversations — the kind of conversations that will shape their thoughts and values.

When your children read on their own, you'll find it quite common for them to initiate conversation with you without being prompted... because it's enjoyable for children to talk about the stories they're reading. Especially good stories.

But even if your children don't initiate a conversation with you, the Sonlight Study Guides provide plenty of great discussion questions to help you along.

Elaine B from Massachusetts told us:

*Sonlight gives us a platform in which to explore and discuss the world in light of our beliefs. My kids are learning how to think critically and logically by reading all kinds of books and discussing all kinds of issues with us. Sonlight has become more than a curriculum. It is part of our lifestyle.*

Interaction with your children is vital to their education. And literature, more than any other educational medium, encourages this interaction.



## What About the Alternatives?

I started this article with a comment about how most homeschoolers seem to rely on "textbooks and other educational media." You may think, "Those are obviously tried and true resources. Why would I ever think I could do better by using historical novels, biographies and discovery books?"

So let's consider the alternatives.

### 1. Textbook Curricula

#### **Lots of Information in a Small Space**

While textbooks cram lots of information in a relatively small space,<sup>1</sup> they're not nearly as effective as great literature in their ability to interest children in the subjects they discuss and to get them excited about learning.

Take this excerpt from a "popular"<sup>2</sup> seventh grade American history textbook, for example:

***The shot heard 'round the world.*** On the morning of April 19, 1775, the first shots of the **War for Independence** (sometimes called the ***Revolutionary War***) were fired at Lexington, Massachusetts. It is not known for sure who fired the first shot, but it was a shot heard 'round the world, for it was to change the course of human history.

After killing eight Americans and wounding ten others at Lexington, the British marched on to Concord, destroying the military supplies stored there. **The Battle of Lexington and Concord** was not quite over, however. As the British troops headed back to Boston, patriots fired on them from behind trees, shrubs, and barns. Although 93 Americans died that day, the British lost 273 men. For a brief moment in history, little Massachusetts stood alone against one of the great empires of the world.

***The Second Continental Congress.*** Less than a month after the Battle of Lexington and Concord, on May 10, 1775, the Second Continental Congress convened in Philadelphia. John Hancock was elected president. The assembled representatives of the American people decided emphatically that they would fight. The ***Continental Army*** was established, a call was issued to the colonies to raise troops and funds, and **George Washington** (1732-1799), who had distinguished himself as a lieutenant colonel in the French and Indian War, was appointed commander-in-chief.<sup>3</sup>

A bit *boring*, wouldn't you agree? A bit *overwhelming*? Amongst this fire hose spray of information, which names, which dates, which statistics is the reader supposed to carry away?



### **Boring, Overwhelming, Useless**

Surprisingly, little else is said about the Revolutionary War in this particular textbook. We are given four more dense paragraphs in which we read a climactic statement that falls flat, despite its effort to excite the reader:

In 1781, five years after the Declaration of Independence, the last major battle of the War for Independence was over — an American victory, a British surrender!<sup>4</sup>

I don't know about you, but despite its dense presentation of facts, I'd expect a little more depth in a 7th grade textbook. I'd expect more than seven paragraphs of names and dates to cover the Revolutionary War.

I'd expect a little more context, too, in which to anchor all that information. So "John Hancock was elected president": Who cares? The text doesn't tell us a thing about John Hancock, how he came to be president, or why it even matters.

Even more important, why did the Revolutionary War happen? What were its consequences? How does it affect us today? Alas, this "popular" Christian textbook addresses none of these questions.

### **The Source Hardly Matters: They're All the Same**

A seventh grade world history textbook published by another major homeschool provider devotes all of seven paragraphs to World War II. The literary style is more vigorous than the last text from which we quoted. (It includes more active verbs, more exciting descriptions.) But truly: is this the kind of material that will help you remember what you ought to about World War II?

After five paragraphs that set the stage and "explain" the Nazis' rise to power, this equally "popular" textbook says:

Slowly the Russians began to turn back the Nazi forces in the east. In the west, the United States and Britain began to chip away at the Axis empire. They landed in North Africa in 1942, then in Sicily in 1943, and then on the mainland of Italy two months later. Finally, on June 6, 1944, known as **D-day**, a huge Allied force landed in France and shattered Germany's defenses. Like a vise, the Allied forces crushed the Axis nations between them. Italian rebels shot Mussolini and hung his body up in a gas station. Hitler shot himself in his bunker under the ruins of Berlin rather than surrender. On May 8, 1945, the war in Europe ended.<sup>5</sup>

Again, the textbook lists many names and dates, but provides almost no *context*. There's no *story* in which to anchor the information... no *drama* to make the information memorable.

### **Literature Brings History Alive**

Here's just a short segment from Sonlight's Third Year Read-Aloud, *Johnny Tremain*. (Remember, you have just read typical excerpts from a couple of 7th grade textbooks.



This is part of Sonlight's "3rd grade" program.) It describes Boston citizens watching British soldiers return from their defeat at the Battle of Lexington:

Although no townsmen, except only the doctors, were permitted on the wharf, Johnny knew that hundreds of them stood well back and in the darkness, gloating. They were not saying much, only watching. Then one man began to whistle and the next took it up and the next and the next. The whistling was shrill as a fife. They had not forgotten the prophecy of that morning, "They go out by "Yankee Doodle," but they'll dance to it before nightfall!"

'Yankee Doodle' filled the darkness....

Four more boats were coming in. Johnny dared move out onto the wharf, but he still kept well in shadow. More wounded. Could these be the very men who had started out so confidently? Bedraggled, dirty, torn uniforms, torn flesh, lost equipment. Faces ghastly with fatigue and pain. Some were twisting and crying out.

The first boats were filled with privates. They had been packed in, and now were being tossed ashore, like so much cordwood. Most of them were pathetically good and patient, but he saw an officer strike a man who was screaming.

Johnny's hands clenched. 'It is just as James Otis said,' he thought. 'We are fighting, partly, for just that. Because a man is a private is no reason he should be treated like cordwood.'

The literature-rich approach to home education provides the context; it communicates information in the midst of a story. You can't miss the drama because "you are there." You feel the pain. You grieve the losses.... You are there, in the thick of things. And you understand and remember. Maybe not the exact dates. But you remember the years, or the general places and times in history. Because you understand the broader context.

As Shary in Virginia wrote recently,

*I think remembering dates is relatively unimportant, but yesterday I decided — just for fun — to ask my 10-year-old son, "What year did Franklin Roosevelt take office?" The book from which I got the question provided three choices for answers: 1933, 1903, 1973.*

*My son's response: "Well, let's see. The 1920s were when the US was doing really well and people were making lots of money. Then the stock market crashed and we went into the Depression. So it had to have been 1933 when he took office."*

*My response: Thank you, Sonlight!*

*Do I care that he remembered the exact date? No. Do I care that he knew enough of what was going on that he could figure it out? You bet.*

### **Literature v. Textbooks: No Contest**

Again: Wouldn't you rather read five hundred paragraphs like those from Johnny Tremain, than just one or two like the textbook paragraphs above?



Yes, literature-rich homeschooling may take more time. (Maybe.) The difference is, your kids (and you!) will quit counting it as "school" and begin to think of it as something you do because you want to.

While textbooks will likely bore your children and cause them to tune out, literature-rich homeschooling will excite them and encourage them to learn. That's why we're unafraid to give you [our One-Year Guarantee](#): "Your kids will love to learn or your money back." Can you imagine a textbook publisher making a similar promise?

## 2. Computer-Based Education

Computer-based learning is very popular these days, and it's not confined to public schools and pre-graduate programs. Homeschoolers have been embracing computer-based learning too.

### **What Do Your Kids Get: A Feeling Human Being or a Soulless Machine?**

The computer, obviously, can be a great tool for education. We use ours all the time... to look things up on the internet and to help us write papers. But if a computer becomes the dominant force in your curriculum, then your children will probably miss out on the one thing that makes homeschooling uniquely beneficial for your kids. What's that, you ask? How about *you*? *You* are the one resource that can make homeschooling become more precious to your kids — indeed, to your entire family — than all the books in the world.

I wish I knew how to explain this. It's the difference between sitting on the couch, snuggled together (or, when the kids are older, sitting on the couch and rubbing shoulders, literally — as I've had the privilege to do with our teenage kids) and your kids sitting in one room glued to a computer screen while you're off doing something completely unrelated.

It's the difference between you and your kids crying together and talking through the significance of a particularly poignant scene in a gripping novel, and your kids rather listlessly clicking on "correct" answers to standardized tests. It's the difference between having your kids learn, through years of experience, that you are a *perfect* source for wise counsel and thoughtful discourse as opposed to them figuring mom and dad would rather not be bothered — so they get their "best" counsel from friends.

### **Convenient, Yes. But at What Cost?**

A computer-based education *is* "convenient," in a way, because it requires less involvement from you. But it short-circuits meaningful interaction... interaction that will have far more educational — and *personal* — value to your kids than a computer program can possibly provide.

While the computer will readily displace time you might otherwise spend with your children in face-to-face conversation, there is little evidence that computers improve academic achievement. Indeed, as Marie Winn notes:



Evidence of a negative impact [from computer use in the classroom], especially in early childhood and elementary education, is beginning to trickle in. [...] In the latest NAEP math assessment, students who spent more time on computers in school didn't score any higher than their peers; in fact their performance was slightly worse.<sup>z</sup>

In sum, then: while we are convinced computers can contribute to a rich learning environment, we are also convinced their use should be strictly limited to those tasks for which they are particularly well-suited. They certainly should not be the primary medium through which your children learn.

Great literature and quality interaction with you — mom and dad — should form the core of your curriculum.

## More Advantages of Literature-Rich Homeschooling

### Literature is portable

Paperback books are much easier to carry around than textbooks or computers. That means you can take your homeschool on the road with minimal effort.

### It's economical

Literature can be saved and used again to teach younger children. We estimate that about 90% of what's available from Sonlight can be reused. Textbook and workbook curricula, which rely heavily on materials that are "used up" each year, will require you to repurchase about 50% of what you buy to teach another student at a future time. And computer-based curricula must be upgraded periodically to keep pace with technology.

### It's emotional

With textbooks and computer-based curricula, you're reading someone else's report about what happened. With literature — and, in particular, historical fiction — you're actually there to see, feel, and hear what's happening. You *experience* history rather than merely reading about it.

## But Can a Literature-Rich Program Work for Me?

A literature-rich homeschool curriculum requires a significant time commitment on your part. Why? Because:

- **If you don't read aloud to your kids, your kids won't get the maximum value out of the curriculum.**

With Sonlight, your children will (at least through 7th Year) both read books on their own and listen as you read stories aloud.



Believe it or not, in the younger years, your willingness to read aloud to your kids is more important than their willingness and ability to read independently.<sup>2</sup>

And the reasons this is true aren't too hard to understand. Most fundamentally:

- **Kids *understand* far more words than they are able to read (or speak).**

But also, when you read aloud to your children:

- **You are able to explain concepts and provide background information they would otherwise miss.**
- **You are able to correct faulty assumptions and incorrect impressions they would otherwise embrace.**

For the same reason you will often hold young children on the sled or in the roller-coaster when they make their first ride, or you will hold their hands on a guided tour of a cave:

- **By "accompanying them" on a literary adventure, you can help guide their emotional response to materials that might otherwise — and unnecessarily — affect them negatively.**

Point: By reading aloud to your kids, you can introduce them to ideas, concepts, people and cultures far beyond where they would go on their own or where you would want them to go without adult supervision.

It follows, conversely, that if you choose not to read aloud to your children, they'll learn far less than they might otherwise. And it's likely their future academic success will be diminished.

### Literature-Rich Homeschooling Is *Not* "Too Hard"

Some people wrongly assume that using a literature-rich homeschool curriculum is "too hard." They feel overwhelmed by the number of books we include in our [curriculum](#). They feel hesitant to teach their children real history using fiction. And they feel ill-equipped to deal with the broad range of situations and issues they'll encounter during the year.

You might be experiencing some of these same feelings yourself right now. If you are, please let me address your concerns.

1. **"It will take *way* too much time to teach using a literature-rich curriculum. It will take far *less* time to leave them in their classroom school, hand them a textbook, or put them in front of the computer."**

Despite our emphasis on reading aloud to your children in the younger years, Sonlight takes a relatively small amount of time when compared to classroom school.



Whereas students who attend classroom schools are in class for six hours a day, your children will be "in class" for only one-and-a-half to two hours at the kindergarten level and four to six hours in "grade" six.

And your involvement, on average, will be one-and-a-half hours at the kindergarten level and just two to possibly three-and-a-half hours in "grade" six.

Is that really a lot of time?

I've spoken with a lot of moms who have their kids in classroom schools. I can't tell you how often I hear them lamenting the untold hours they spend shuttling their kids back and forth to school activities, "volunteering" to serve as classroom monitors and teacher's helpers, participating in fund-raising activities, and helping with homework.

When you add it all up, a classroom school will demand as much of your time as homeschooling will.

And what about textbooks and computer programs? How wonderful it sounds: just "plug them in" to their textbooks and workbooks or computer programs and — Hey! You're done! What could be simpler?

But *is* it simpler? Is that savings in time worth the costs you'll pay?

Remember:

- You'll miss all that intimate snuggle time with your little ones.
- You'll miss the life-shaping conversations you could be enjoying with your children — conversations that happen because you consistently spend significant time together.
- You'll miss, when they become teenagers, the *relationships* you could have enjoyed with your children: relationships that include mutual respect, honor, and trust as they turn to *you*, rather than their peer group, for insightful counsel about their lives.

Of course you have to make your own decision. There *are* costs involved in choosing to spend time with your kids. There are also tremendous costs you'll pay if you choose *not* to spend that time.

2. **"I couldn't possibly teach my kids — and, most especially, teach them *history* — using literature! Textbooks, workbooks and computer programs may offer only a relatively mediocre education, but at least I can be sure I won't be risking my kids' entire futures on some untested method of 'education' that someone I don't know claims *could be better!*"**



Let me first note that Sonlight Curriculum has been around for 20+ years. And, as you will see toward the back of our catalog, many of our students are graduating and moving on toward college. And not just run-of-the-mill colleges, but some of the top universities in the nation.

So the claim that literature-rich education offers something more than textbooks, workbooks, and computer programs is not just sales-talk. It's real.

But let us talk about the matter of teaching history with literature.

On the surface, of course, the idea that you can use fiction to teach real history sounds ridiculous. But when you think about it, there is a lot of common sense to the notion.

First, good historical fiction is based on solid research. That means the fiction your children read will contain many historical facts and be based on real historical events.

The dialogue, of course, is made up. But even the dialogue is based on what the author has been able to learn from historical records about all the individuals' personalities and habits.

Second, keep in mind that neither textbooks nor great literature are entirely free from error. In fact, when it comes to history, you'll find many nonfiction sources that contradict each other. One textbook says one thing, another says something else.

History is never as simple and straightforward as we would like it to be. It's big and it's complicated. The important thing is that you teach your children *how to think* so they can examine multiple sources — both fiction and nonfiction — and form their own opinions about "what really happened."

But beyond this, the Sonlight Instructor's Guides contain schedules that lay out your children's assignments day by day; study guides that help you keep up with your children's reading; comprehension questions that help you gauge your children's understanding; and much more.

Even if you have *no prior experience*, the Instructor's Guides will help you quickly ease into a teaching role. And within a few weeks you'll be teaching like a natural.

Yes, the number of books Sonlight includes in its programs might look overwhelming, but the indispensable support of the Instructor's Guides will help you persevere through all the challenges and joys of homeschooling your children. (See page 144 for the full article about Sonlight Instructor's Guides.)



3. **"Frankly, I'd be scared to teach my kids. I don't know enough! How would I know if what a book says is true or 'made up'? And how can I be sure I'm covering everything my kids need to know?"**

One of the biggest fears parents who have never homeschooled express has to do with the possibility that their children will ask them questions they can't answer. Or that they — the parents — will fail to teach their kids something (or a whole lot of somethings) that their kids really need to know.

And so, they fear, they will fail their children. The kids won't qualify for the college education Mom and Dad so ardently desire for them. Or the kids will become social or intellectual outcasts.

Sarita likes to point out that she has never met a homeschooling mom whose teenage child is unable to read. And the classroom schools meanwhile? You've heard the statistics: 20% to 30% or more of all kids taught by the "professionals" *don't know how to read!* (And you worry that you may not be able to teach your kids?)

A mom is simply unwilling to let her child fail. If one method won't work, then she'll find another that will.

So it is in every area of study.

You have resources you can turn to and experiences you can draw from to answer almost any question your children can ask.

So what if your children ask questions that stump you?

Our advice: confess you don't know the answer and tell them you would love their help to find it. Then teach your children how to find the answer. All of you will grow together in the process and you will almost assuredly discover some fascinating things you never knew before!

But beyond that, you'll find that our History / Bible / Literature Instructor's Guides — the guides that cover History, Read-Alouds, Readers, and Bible — include incisive questions and large quantities of vital information that will help you give your children a more balanced perspective on almost everything you read — and they will help you answer questions your children may ask.

So, for instance, in the D guide you'll find an article that discusses who really "discovered" America. (Hint: it wasn't Christopher Columbus.) And in the level G guide you'll find a note that explains some of the shortcomings of Susan Wise Bauer's *Story of the World*.

Despite these valuable aids, the truth is your kids *will* "miss" some piece of information that their friends know. It's bound to happen. But, truly, it doesn't



matter. Public and private school kids will miss certain facts and figures, too. However, your kids will have the *know-how* and *desire* to find the information they need.

## What Our Customers Say

Our customers echo much of what I've told you. But I think you need to hear it from them... so you know we're not just "blowing smoke." Here is a brief collection of just a few things they've told us recently about their experiences with Sonlight's unique curriculum.

*Sonlight is not your traditional "sit-at-your-desks-and-let's-pretend-this-is-a-classroom" curriculum... it is not rote memorization for the sake of memorization. It is real learning, from real books. It's "let's whet your whistle and keep you coming back for more" kind of learning. It's what kids want and it's what moms need. It's just plain good.*

— Lisa M

*One of the goals my husband and I decided on was that we want our children to learn how to think and not what to think. We could see that workbooks and textbooks would not help with that goal. The other goal we had was that we wanted our children to fall in love with learning. What better way to do that than to read together and enjoy what we are reading... to learn from great books?*

— Linda in Idaho

*We have encountered many textbook students who are overwhelmed and confused when they read several sources with conflicting opinions. But Sonlight has taught my son how to evaluate opinions and think logically. He can recognize an author's worldview, compare it with a Biblical worldview, discuss the issue rationally, and form his own opinions. I can think of no greater goal of education.*

— Sandy C

What these Sonlight customers are saying is not isolated. We literally receive hundreds of notes like these every year.

We would love it if you'd allow us to show you how exciting and enjoyable [Sonlight's literature-based homeschool curriculum](#) can be. We would love it even more if we could provide you with such a positive homeschooling experience that you feel compelled to tell us *your* success story next year.



## Try Sonlight with a One-Year Guarantee

If you think you'd like to give Sonlight Curriculum a try... if you want your children to love to learn and to think critically about the many viewpoints they'll be exposed to in life... then I encourage you to take advantage of our "[Love to Learn](#)" Guarantee: "Your kids will love to learn or your money back." You'll have one year to use half of your curriculum (18 weeks worth of material) to see if Sonlight is right for you and your family with absolutely no risk on your part. (See [www.sonlight.com/guarantee](http://www.sonlight.com/guarantee) for details.)

No matter what you decide to use, we pray God's blessing on you as you seek to educate your children at home.

*Have questions about just how a literature-rich homeschool experience can work in your family and with your schedule? Talk with a [Sonlight Advisor](#) or call us at 1-800-903-1675. We look forward to serving you!*

1. Note that word *relatively*! The average textbook weighs a couple of pounds, is too large to sit comfortably on a child's lap, and is several hundred pages long. [Back to Article](#)
2. I put the word *popular* in quotes because, on the one hand — for reasons that will become obvious in a moment — I can't imagine any child loves to read it (i.e., therefore, it has to be *unpopular* among its readers), yet, on the other, Christian homeschoolers have been purchasing this book by the truckload. [Back to Article](#)
3. Jerry H. Combee, Ph.D., Kurt Grussendorf, Beka Horton, Brian Ashbaugh, Susan Etheridge, *History of the World in Christian Perspective*, Third Edition (Pensacola, FL: A Beka Book, 1995), 310. [Back to Article](#)
4. Ibid. [Back to Article](#)
5. Terri Koontz, B.S., Mark Sidwell, Ph.D., S.M. Bunkder, M.A., *World Studies for Christian Schools*, Second Edition (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1998), 432-433. [Back to Article](#)
6. Esther Forbes, *Johnny Tremain* (New York: Dell Publishing 1943), 240-241. Sonlight item [#DA04](#). [Back to Article](#)
7. Marie Winn, *The Plug-In Drug* (New York: Penguin Books, 2002), 165-167. [Back to Article](#)
8. Barbara Radisavljevic is just one of many who has noted that research shows that "reading out loud to children is the single most important thing a parent can do to prepare a child for future academic success." — Barbara Radisavljevic, "The Benefits of Reading Aloud as a Family." [Back to Article](#)

### How do I use Sonlight with multiple students?

Teaching multiple children at different ages can sometimes feel difficult to manage. Sonlight makes it easier by dividing our curriculum into two types of subjects: Couch and Table Subjects.

Unlike a traditional textbook approach, you don't have to order a separate Sonlight program for each child. You can combine multiple children for Couch Subjects (think History / Bible / Literature and Science), then do skill based Table Subjects (Language Arts, Math, Spelling, and Handwriting) separately with each child, according to ability.

Sonlight helps you navigate teaching multiple children while saving you time, money and frustrations. This time together will help to build rich, life-long family bonds.



## Couch Subjects™

Couch Subjects are those you can do sitting on the couch, subjects like Bible, History, Read-Alouds, and Science.

These subjects are all about learning new information. And children in a large range of ages can all learn the same information. Sonlight programs teach using biographies, historical fiction, and other books designed to appeal to both children and adults.

If you've ever read C.S. Lewis's Chronicles of Narnia, you know that they are not only good for readers who are eleven years old. They are good for children younger than eleven, and older than eleven--even adults.

So if you are homeschooling more than one child, you can use one Sonlight program for multiple children for all Couch Subjects.

In general, one program will work well if your children are within about three years of one another. If you have very young children, or if your children cover a wider range of ages, or if you want further reassurance, please don't hesitate to contact one of our [Curriculum Advisors](#).

## Table Subjects™

Table Subjects are those that you probably do at a table or desk, including Language Arts, Spelling, and Math. These subjects are all about building skills.

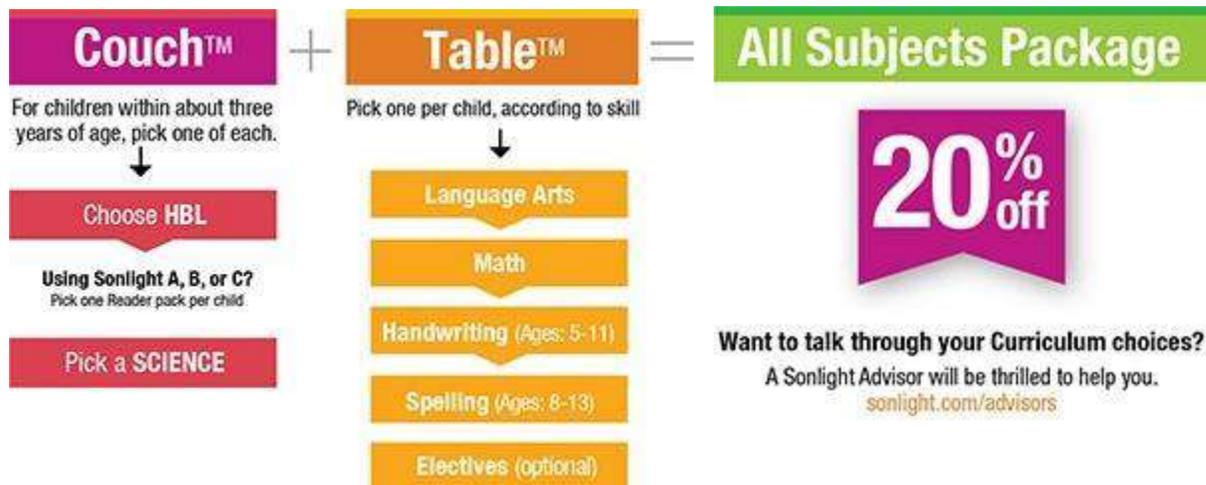
With Table Subjects, you will want to choose one for each child, according to each child's skill level.

### **And one exception**

There is one more item you need to consider, especially if your children are younger than third grade. If you are using a Sonlight program up to Sonlight D, choose the Readers appropriate for each child's reading ability. (From third grade on, the Readers are integral to the program--no need to choose.)



Get an All-Subjects Package and save 20%.



## How to put this together?

1. Choose a [History / Bible / Literature](#) and a [Science](#) program, one for all students within about three years of age.
2. Choose a [math program](#) for each student, based on each student's ability. [Find placement tests here.](#)
3. Pick a [Language Arts program](#) that fits each student's skill level. Besides the graded programs, you might also need:
  - Handwriting
  - Spelling (built-in K-2, add for students in Grade 3-5)
  - Readers (for students in Grades K-2)

We've made this process simple for you with [SmoothCourse™](#). We'll walk you through each step of the process and help you add the materials you need when you need them.

[Get started now](#)