

How to Put Fabulous Fun on Your Homeschool Transcript

Convert Natural Learning
Into High School Credit

The
HomeScholar
The HomeScholar LLC
Helping Parents Homeschool High School



How to Put Fabulous Fun on Your Homeschool Transcript

A White Paper

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Introduction

Some people simply aren't textbook people! What do you do if your homeschooler learns by living, instead of studying textbooks? What if your child soaks up knowledge like a sponge, without being directed in any way?

Can you still create a serious-looking high school transcript? Yes!

My son, Alex, was a self-motivated extreme learner. If only it were an Olympic event, like extreme sports! He learned novel writing for fun and wanted to take a third year of French, even though I didn't have a curriculum for him. He asked for an American Government curriculum for Christmas and read every economics book he could get his hands on. Although his "love language" is reading, he was still a delight directed learner. When it was time to make his transcript, I still had to figure out how to translate his experiences onto a piece of paper.

For our family, the problem seemed huge. What should I do with all the experiences that cover a wide range of subjects? Was that report on Jean Baptiste Say (the French economist), a paper on history, economics, or foreign language? Was my son, Kevin's enjoyment of Russian history part of World History class or could it be a course by itself? My children wrote so many papers but I didn't know what subject I should attribute them to! Where should I file each of them?

I eventually found a system that could help me sort out all their delight directed learning, using my understanding of traditional grades and credits. It's not difficult once you get the hang of it. Before I go further, please make sure you have read up on grades and credits first. Think about any textbooks you happen to use. Once you understand how to calculate grades and credits with a book, it's easier to understand how to do it with delight directed learning.

The Sticky Note Strategy

Once I figured out how to do it, I realized that my system would work for *all* delight directed learners, not only “book learners.” I also realized it could help parents who are themselves kinesthetic learners. My strategy is simple, fun, and only requires one small purchase—sticky notes. Yup. Those small square notes save the day again! You can determine what to do with each experience using a simple sticky note.

For each activity your student is involved in, there are five pieces of information you need to remember. Write these five things on the sticky note and save it with your homeschool records. At the end of each year, group the sticky notes together and combine them to create high school courses.

I recognize that it’s hard to determine where each experience will fall on a transcript, so keep each sticky note simple. Here is what I suggest. On each note, indicate the following items:



Name the Experience

In the middle, write the experience. What did your child do? “Perform in Nutcracker.” Do you have any course title ideas, such as “Theatrical performance” or “Economics?” Take a guess—and feel free to guess many times on each sticky note!

Note the Year

What year did your child do this? Sometimes it will be a school year, such as 2018-2019, and other times it will be for a short duration, such as a play in November of 2018.

Grade the Experience

Did your student complete the project to your expectations? Were they successful and did they receive positive feedback or learn something? Remember that you don't have to test in order to give a grade. Instead, you can evaluate in other ways.

Note Credits Earned or Hours Spent

Count or estimate the number of hours you spent on the project. A total of 75 to 90 hours could be recorded as a half credit when your child is done with the experience. If your child has more than 180 hours, you could consider it a very full credit, or you might choose to divide up experiences into smaller, bite-sized pieces and then regroup them into other courses with 180 hours apiece. If your child accumulates less than 75 hours, you will be grouping the sticky notes together (and I'll describe that in a moment). Keep sticky notes even when the activity required few hours. You can use these experiences no matter how few hours they spend.

Suggest Possible Subject Areas

You may not know which subjects you will use for each experience, but it's good to record the possibilities. With all our reports and papers, I often put several ideas on each note. One paper might be regarded as English or history or economics or French. By making a note of it, I could decide later which course needed that experience to

make up a full credit. If history was already packed, then perhaps I would use another subject area.

Spread Them Out and Group Them Together

Once you have your sticky notes, don't review them until you are working on the transcript. Checking them too often can cause frustration and insecurity, so only review them when you update your child's transcript. This will help you keep the big picture in mind. When you are ready to work on the transcript, spread all the sticky notes on the table or floor. Then put them into "affinity groups" (groups of similar things). As you combine these activities, work to combine them into groups that ultimately add up to one credit or half credit subjects.

Once you have made a decision, put the course on your transcript. You can make a note of the experiences you included on the transcript, if you want to. This will help if you later decide to add course descriptions to your homeschool record. But once you've decided on a credit, try not to stress about it again. It's easy enough to change when you need to, but putting these experiences into groups is a success in itself. You have successfully grouped your child's delight directed learning into high school level courses!

This whole process of spreading notes out on the floor and manually grouping and regrouping experiences is a great technique for any parent who is a kinesthetic learner. Even if you don't use a hands-on curriculum, **this hands-on transcript process can help you understand the nuances of your child's transcripts if you are a kinesthetic parent**, and the process can ultimately help you remember what was included in what course—and even help you write course descriptions! Make sure you keep the information with your homeschool records.

The Testing Strategy

Another way to quantify delight directed learning is to give subject tests. This doesn't work for every subject or every child, but it's an option to consider. Instead of testing your children as they are learning, you allow them to learn a subject naturally. When they are done, you can give them a sample test from a major test provider. If they pass the sample test at home or at the testing center, you will know how much they have learned and will have a grade to put on their transcript. There are three tests available that will help you with this strategy: SAT Subject Tests, Advanced Placement (AP) exams, and CLEP (College Level Exam Program) tests.

Parents don't always know what their children are learning. There is so much life that goes on—and so many books! It's amazing what children will learn when we aren't looking! Using CLEP exams, I found out how true this could be! I told my students to look over the exams “just to see what they were like.” One son was able to pass an exam in Business Law, even though I had never seen a law book in my home. He passed the Principles of Marketing test, even though I had never seen a marketing book in my home. He passed both Microeconomics *and* Macroeconomics, even though I still don't know exactly what those two words mean. By testing them, I was able to put some courses on the transcript that were a surprise even to me!

When using tests to document delight directed learning, be sure to avoid failure. Purchase a book with sample tests in it and give the exam at home first. Only take your student to an official test if you are reasonably sure they can pass the test. Your goal is to find out what they have learned, not demonstrate what they have *not* learned. For more information on SAT Subject Tests, AP exams, or CLEP tests, please go to CollegeBoard.org.

Finding Balance

To homeschool high school effectively, include as much delight directed learning as possible. A fun learning environment does not make school easy, but it makes homeschooling interesting and applicable. When school is interesting, children will learn more and they will *love* learning more.

Parents need to find a balance, however. College preparation means parents must cover the core classes and at the same time capture delight directed learning. This is not difficult.

When planning your week, first be sure to *cover* the core classes of reading, writing, math, science, and social studies. Each family has classes they consider non-negotiable core classes. Try to teach these classes in an interesting way. It's possible to teach many core subjects with delight directed classes, but make sure you cover the core one way or another.

Once the core is covered, *capture* the delights of your child. Translate them into courses on your transcript. You don't have to plan, direct, or evaluate that learning through tests or quizzes. Simply capture learning.

Get More Help

Every year, your job as a homeschool parent is to update your school records, including transcript and course descriptions. For better or worse, you chose this vocation, and this is a job that needs to be done. Whether you find this job as messy as diapers or as joyful as a day at the beach, you still need to get the job done.

Invest in yourself and your chosen vocation. Take a class or invest in continuing education classes for homeschool parents, so you can stay up-to-date on high school record keeping.

The [Total Transcript Solution](#) will help you create a homeschool transcript that colleges will love. It will give you the tools, templates, and resources you need to get the job done quickly and painlessly. Included is a 20 minute personal phone or email consultation with Lee so you can get your questions answered. For panic situations, it includes a helpful “Emergency Transcript Help” package to walk you through and get the job done within one evening from start to finish.

Need a book instead? Book lovers who need something to hold in their hands can get help from my [Setting the Records Straight: How to Craft Homeschool Transcripts and Course Descriptions for College Admission and Scholarships](#) paperback book. This white paper is taken from Chapter 10 of the book, available on Amazon.