

Homeschooling

RESOURCES FOR WRITING OBJECTIVES

(The affidavit includes) an outline of proposed education objectives by subject area. The required outline of proposed education objectives shall not be utilized by the superintendent in determining if the home education program is out of compliance with this section and section 1327.-Act 169 of 1988

When you file your notarized affidavit, you must attach a list of objectives that you plan to meet over the year. Your list must be arranged by subject area. Your affidavit cannot be rejected because of perceived inadequacies as long as you have covered every subject. In other words, you are not seeking approval of your particular program, but rather letting officials know that you do indeed have plans and directions. Many parents would want to include goal statements about their religious beliefs as they affect particular subject areas, and this is certainly fine, although not required. The local superintendent cannot try in any way to make you exclude religious education.

The sample affidavit included at the end of Chapter 1 lists the required subject areas for elementary students (grades 1 through 6) and secondary students (grades 7 through 12). It is clear from the practice of secondary schools that not all subjects are expected every year. For example, algebra is usually taught one year while geometry is taught another. Since only three years of mathematics is required for graduation from a home education program, it is clear the mathematics only need be taught for three of the four high school years. Elementary schools usually teach each required subject every year, except for PA History which is customarily taught in the 4th grade. Parents who use a correspondence school curriculum with elementary school students will often have to supplement the “scope and sequence” with objectives for art, music, physical education, Pennsylvania history, fire safety, or other areas which are required by Pennsylvania law, but not provided in the curriculum.

Some parents get objectives directly from the materials that they plan to use. They take chapter titles, and turn them into objectives and study topics. Some parents negotiate the written objectives with their children so that the objectives become goals that the children will work toward. For example: When Tom and Madalene Murphy wanted to study American history with their son Christian, they asked him what parts of American history he wanted to concentrate on. Christian was fascinated by automobiles and machines, especially the Stanley Steamer. So the written objective allowed the family to plan activities like reading books about the Stanley brothers and about Theodore Roosevelt and it enabled them to take advantage of events like a TV biography of “Theodore Roosevelt and a local museum fair that just happened to include a 1915 Stanley Steamer.

Most parents do not list specific texts or source materials with their objectives; that will come after the fact in your portfolio. Objectives can be written in a broad and general enough way to encompass many possible materials.

The remainder of this resource guide includes some lists of objectives that you might want to adapt when you put together your own objectives. Don’t feel that you have to reinvent the educational wheel; feel free to borrow when appropriate.

Objective Sample #1 – (Student: Jesse)

If you write your objectives in a broad enough way, they will give you the flexibility to jump wholeheartedly into unplanned projects during the year. Here is a sampling of some of the more flexible objectives that could be included in the list of objectives this student - various years:

MATH

--Jesse will use problem solving mathematics skills in daily life applications—when building, estimating distance, using money, counting and classifying, map reading, solving “found” word problems in newspaper articles, using calculator.

ENGLISH

--Jesse will focus on an author of choice and read several works by that author, comparing how the works are similar or different, how the author changed his approach or developed a consistent style.

GEOGRAPHY

--Jesse will continue to utilize map reading while on family trips, demonstrating use of scale, highway codes, direction, and understanding of how land formations dictate where roadways can be located.

SOCIAL STUDIES

--Jesse will be involved in choosing a series of independent study topics in the Social Studies this year, developing his research skills and question-raising abilities. Jesse will continue to read and listen to biographies, historical fiction, and history/geography books and magazines relating to chosen Social Studies themes. Jesse will help to choose the area of focused study. He will help plan

projects relating to the area chosen, with a goal being to share his project at a Spring History and Science Fair for Homeschoolers. It is our educational philosophy that these themes should not be discreet “packages” of knowledge, completed and then forgotten, but instead should be readily related one to another, seeing the common links throughout history, the overlap of one area with another.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

--Jesse will continue to take part in regular daily physical activity aimed at developing aerobic health, adequate muscular strength, and flexibility. Our emphasis is on introducing Jesse to lifelong healthful activities that people of many ages can take part in.

MUSIC

--Jesse will continue to sing with our family regularly, especially focusing on the music of our folk heritage. Whenever possible, songs and music from a time period studied in Social Studies will be listened to and learned, again striving for unity and interdisciplinary work. Jesse will continue to improve his voice quality and ability to sing with good intonation and pitch. A special emphasis will be on continuing to learn to sing rounds in a large group setting, with possible performance possibilities.

Objective Sample #2 – (Student: Rebecca)

Here are the sixth grade educational objectives written and submitted by a homeschool parent for her daughter Rebecca.

ENGLISH - to include spelling, reading and writing

- Literature based sustained silent reading program - at least 45 minutes daily.
- Read aloud to preschoolers.
- Reading from a variety of fiction, nonfiction, history, mythology, folk tales, biography, mystery, poetry, plays.
- Improve spelling skills through the use of a spelling list and correction of spelling errors made.
- Improve reference and study skills.
- Learn about the resources and uses of the library.

--Improve grammar skills using Learning Grammar Through Writing

- Sustained silent writing program - journals, letters, poems, essays, reports, etc.
- Learn to correct her own writing using Learning Grammar Through Writing.

ARITHMETIC

- Improve her ability to manipulate whole numbers through addition.
- Improve her ability to use decimals and fractions.
- Improve her ability to solve word problems.

- Improve her ability to understand and use mathematical relationships.
- Improve her ability to solve money problems.
- Improve her measurement skills and her ability to solve problems involving measurements.
- Improve her graph reading ability.
- Develop her ability to understand and use scale measurements.
- Continue to use math in practical applications such as the kitchen, the garden, the grocery store, traveling, etc.

SCIENCE

- To increase her knowledge of the scientific process.
- To encourage science experimentation and child directed learning.
- To turn everyday experiences into science lessons (such as dissecting a non-poisonous snake that found its way into a local greenhouse).
- To encourage reading about science and scientists in a wide field of interest.
- To encourage a love and respect for nature and an understanding of natural processes.
- To increase knowledge of nature through the use of guide books and resource persons.
- To learn the use of science textbooks and other resources when needed.

GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY, CIVICS

- To develop a concept of history as a continuum, through the use of a time line notebook used from year to year, learning about world history, United States history, and Pennsylvania history.
- To develop an appreciation of Pennsylvania's heritage through the understanding of Pennsylvania history and geography. This will necessarily include the use of books, magazines, maps, local resource persons, the library, travel, and other resources as we discover them.
- Continue to develop her interest in all kinds of history through the use of reading materials on World, United States, and Pennsylvania history and maps of the World, United States, and Pennsylvania.
- Continue to develop her interest in Pennsylvania and United States history through field trips.
- Continue to develop her map and globe use skills, especially of the United States, Pennsylvania, the Far East, Franklin County and local cities and towns.
- Further develop her interest in history and acquaint her with those of import in history. She will read a variety of biographies, histories and historical fiction.
- To stimulate her thinking abilities, we will use discussion, research and reading to compare and contrast different historical figures, their times, cultures and circumstances to come to a better understanding of their place and impact on history.

- Learn to use specific history, civics and geography texts as needed.
- Using field trips, she will be encouraged to appreciate and understand the people and geography of our country.

SAFETY EDUCATION (including regular and continuous instruction in the dangers and prevention of fires)

- Become knowledgeable about bicycle safety.
- Become acquainted with and knowledgeable about emergency and first aid procedures.
- Become more knowledgeable about stranger safety.
- Practice escape routes from our home in the event of fire.
- Learn about fire prevention.
- Become more knowledgeable about procedures in the event of a fire in the home, on her person, on a friend.
- Become more knowledgeable about street and traffic safety.

HEALTH AND PHYSIOLOGY

- Increase her knowledge of the human body and its systems.
- Improve her understanding of personal hygiene, what it is, why it is necessary.
- Improve her understanding of dental hygiene, what it is and why it is necessary.
- Learn about health maintenance.
- Increase her knowledge of good nutrition and other areas affecting good health.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- Continue to encourage gross and fine motor skill development.
- Begin to develop an interest in, and facility with activities that will serve to provide opportunities to be physically and aerobically fit through her adult life.
- Become acquainted with various team sports including the rules to play by, good sportsmanship, and skills necessary to participate in the sports.
- Continue to develop her ability with various individual activities such as bike riding, running, gymnastics, jumping, etc.

MUSIC

- Continue with Suzuki piano lessons.
- Continue to become acquainted with music history.
- Increase her music appreciation by listening to classical, baroque, opera, folk, and hymn music.
- Increase her appreciation of music by attending concerts and visiting musicians.
- Develop her singing ability through choir participation.

ARTS

- Improve her knowledge of art history by reading histories of the arts, biographies of artists, placement of trends in art on the time line mentioned in the section on history and discussions with parents and other resource persons.
- Improve her ability to use various art mediums such as pen and ink, pencil, watercolor, acrylics, etc.--Learn to appreciate and critique art by picture studies, field

- trips to art museums, reading and participating in discussions with parents and other resource persons.
- Discover and learn crafts of her choosing to include bookbinding and others.
- Discover the effect of culture on art and the effect of art on culture through the study of art pieces and reading.
- To develop a facility with calligraphy.

Objective Sample #3

Here are the second grade educational objectives written and submitted by another homeschooling family for their son.

SPELLING

- Begin to write words by their phonetic compositions, word families, and common spelling patterns.
- Begin to write sight words from memory.

READING

- Read easy readers.
- Listen to fine literature on a variety of topics.
- Discuss author's voice, style differences among different authors, tone, plot structure, characterization, use of language, and our reactions and responses to the piece of literature.
- Observe the use of reference materials.
- Observe the use of the card catalog at the library. Note differences and similarities between local libraries.

WRITING

- Refine manuscript writing.
- Capitalization and punctuation.
- Compose letters and stories.
- Keep a journal.

ARITHMETIC

- Addition and subtraction facts.
- Place value through hundreds.
- Introduction to multiplication.
- Telling time.
- Use of calendar.
- Count by twos, fives and tens
- Handling of money (coins).
- One-step problem solving.
- Introduction to metric measurement.
- Identifying and creating geometric shapes.
- Logic.

SCIENCE

- Small animals of North America.
- How plants grow and get food.
- Pollination.
- Basic food groups and nutrition.

- Dinosaurs and origins.
- Native plants of Pennsylvania and their uses.
- Prominent names in science.
- Bees.

GEOGRAPHY

- Map making of the neighborhood.
- Communities in other lands.
- Personal, live observations of city, country, beach, mountains.

HISTORY

- Civil War
- Valley Forge during the American Revolution.
- Biographies of prominent Individuals.
- Bible.
- American Indians.
- Pioneers.
- Pilgrims to the New World.
- Ancient Egypt.

CIVICS

- Follow current events on a national and state level.
- Holidays and festivals.
- Patriotism.
- What people do (jobs).
- Prayer for self, others, government leaders.
- Apply the Golden Rule.

SAFETY ED. AND FIRE SAFETY

- Kitchen safety and fire instruction.
- Fireplace safety and fire instruction.
- Safety during physically active play and in sports.
- Crossing streets.

HEALTH AND PHYSIOLOGY

- Dental care.
- Personal care and use of health care workers.
- Major systems of the body (circulatory, digestive, respiratory and nervous).

- Proper balance of activities.
- Prominent names in health care.
- Olympics
- Dangers of alcohol abuse.
- Sexuality and reproductive systems.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- Active, outdoor play including games, riding bicycle, soccer.
- Develop lifetime sport of golf.
- Swimming regularly in summer.
- Hiking, indoor hockey and other active pastimes.

MUSIC

- Listening to various styles of music.
- Using music for play and creative personal expression
- Experiment with harmonica playing.

- Singing alone and in groups.
- Familiarity with US folk songs.
- Study the use of musical instruments in church and in concerts.
- Learn songs of worship.

ART

- Use of various media for creative visual expression including plasticine, various paints, magic markers, pencils, cloth, wood, oil pastels, mosaics, glue, crayons.
- Attend art lessons at local museum.
- Observe and discuss prominent art works exhibited at the local museum
- Picture book observations.
- Art of historic cultures (Egyptian, American Indian).
- Clean up and respect of materials.

High School English Goals:

Pennsylvania Homeschoolers Accreditation Agency (PHAA) has requirements for a high school English course which go beyond the requirements of the home education law. Those pursuing our diploma option may want to include these requirements in their listed objectives:

- Read 25 books or a literature anthology and 15 books.
- Write at least 3 classics.
- Write at least 4 compositions.
- Write a composition that is at least 2500 words long (approx. 10 pages).
- Keep rough drafts of compositions which show that punctuation, usage, and/or grammatical errors were corrected in the process of writing these compositions or work through over ¼ of a language or grammar textbook or log at least 45 daily entries of work in language or grammar study.
- Give at least one speech during the year to a group outside of the immediate family.

Internet Sources:

Another good place to find objectives that might be useful is on the Internet. Check out the following sites for suggestions from various states and organizations:

www.pde.psu.edu This is the PA Dept of Education website, and it contains their listing of new Academic Standards for PA public school students. This site also has terrific links for families to other websites in all subject areas. Interestingly enough, at every grade level it is strongly recommended that students read at least 25 books, just what is required for the PHAA diploma program!

<http://edreform.com> This is the website for the Center for Education Reform, and it has good links to various state standards, and other groups (both conservative and liberal) that are promoting various types of standards for education.

www.goaline.org. Another site with lots of info on standards, including links to various states with clear guidelines in each subject area.

www.ed.gov/pubs/parents This is part of the Federal Department of Education website, and includes on-line versions of popular pamphlets that might be helpful to you in deciding on goals for your own kids.

www.mcrel.org/standards-bench-marks This site is produced by the Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory, and has the most comprehensive listing of standards in all subject areas, using guidelines from all of the national standards groups. Goes beyond basic subjects to also include foreign languages, arts and fitness. It is well worth taking a look at; includes thoughtful articles and more.