

It is also fine to say, “Hm, I’m not sure about that. Let’s look it up.” This gives your child the experience of seeing how to find information and then, most critically, how to use it. Which leads to the next point...

Writing Assignments

In this unit study you will find a variety of short texts, some written by me, some by my son Gabriel and I together, and one by him alone. Those called “summaries” can be used in a variety of ways: they can be used in a variety of ways: they can be used as inspiration for your own summaries which your child can copy into his main lesson book; they can be copied directly by your child as is into his book; they can be used as dictations; and they can be ignored completely or simply used as a chronological reminder!

In addition to the summaries, I have also written a number of other pieces. Some are informational, to help you keep on track in terms of the purpose of this block (like the piece “From the Middle Ages to the Renaissance”), others are examples of the way one could present historical figures such as Charlemagne and Haroun Al-Rashid. Use them as you see fit!

At 12 or 13 a child should still be writing – i.e. composing – with you. Some need this more than others at this age and this is an enjoyable way to help your child to write well. The child can again actively participate in looking for material, culling through it to get the pertinent points and then setting it down as composition. Do all these stages out loud and your child will learn an enormous amount!

By 12 or 13 your child can also write his or her own historical fiction pieces. At this age the appropriate writing (from a Waldorf point of view) is not analysis or criticism of historical events, which are more appropriate in high school, but rather lively descriptions of people or events where the child has to sympathetically enter into what she is describing. A short piece by my son can be found on p. 22.

Dictations are important – they are a third way by which a student learns to write well. If you’ve never done them before, start slow and say things like, “Capital D ... period” etc. and spell out hard words. Don’t be afraid to repeat yourself. Use your voice carefully, breathing out commas, setting off quotations, dropping at periods so that your child can internalize how these are used.

Making a Main Lesson Book

Please never get formulaic with main lesson books! If you’ve been working with Waldorf education for a number of years and your child has been dutifully churning out book after book, it might be time to ditch this form and try something else! If this format has gotten stale it is no longer serving its purpose, i.e. to be a vehicle for the