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Dear Parents,

Thank you for your interest in my homeschooling program for the 2023-2024 school year! For the past seven years, I have been teaching small-group academic classes to groups of 7th, 8th and 9th grade homeschooling students. I have now settled into a two year rotation focusing on 7th and 8th grade.

This program is meant to be a strong academic supplement and support to a homeschooling curriculum. I offer three major academic subjects: English, History, and Math. I typically offer Science as well, but am scaling back this year a bit. Each subject meets once a week for 2 hrs, and then the **students have about 2-3 hours of work to do on their own during the week for each subject**. I am offering a small group for Algebra I this year, and the Math class would meet for one hour. I offer individual math tutoring on a limited basis. I do a quantitative grade qualitative assessment at the end of each semester, and can provide the Evidence of Progress report for your homeschool paperwork at the end of the year.

Some students choose to take all three subjects with me, but some just take one or two to supplement their homeschooling curriculum. Each subject is a full year commitment, as the skills and information presented will build on themselves throughout the year, but the subjects are not dependent on one another.

Since I am trained as a classroom teacher, I do not provide direct support for children with learning differences. However, I am happy to be part of a team to help support students with learning differences including dyslexia and dyscalculia. I will be planning my courses to support students that need alternate methods of “input” and “output” such as using audiobooks and submitting writing assignments as voice recordings. Feel free to contact me if this will be helpful to your child.

I think we are starting to put together a wonderful group for next year! On the following pages, please find the curriculum outlines for each subject. I am happy to schedule a private one-on-one call to discuss, and answer any questions you might have. A deposit of \$200 will be due upon registration to secure your place in the program, which will be deducted from your last month's tuition. Thank you for considering this program for next year, and I hope to hear from you soon!

Alena Solenne



English

In my English curricula I focus on developing creative and expository essay writing, logical thinking, and the ability to study and appreciate literature. I usually break my year of English into three major sections, each one spotlighting a different set of skills that build on one another. I always meet students where they are and help them become more skillful writers, and more thoughtful readers. Each semester is 11 weeks long, with an extra week added for the Essay unit.

Semester 1: Fantasy Literature Genre Study

In this unit, we will read a fantasy novel by a modern author, and talk about the elements that go into the genre of fantasy literature and storytelling. This genre includes fairy tales, superhero stories, and the classic “high fantasy” stories we think of first, such as *Lord of the Rings*. Students will begin to craft their own fantasy world complete with geography, magic systems, and societies, and then write a short fantasy story set in that world. We will look at common tropes and familiar stories such as Disney movies, and fairy tales to start to draw some similarities and generalizations about the genre as a whole.

Semester 2: Expository Essay writing (Working up to a five paragraph essay)

In this unit, we will work up to writing a full five-paragraph essay by starting with sentence structure, and a simple, well-written paragraph. Over the course of the unit, we will slowly build up to a three paragraph, and then finally a five-paragraph essay. Throughout, we will be looking at elements of grammar, sentence structure, and word choice. By the end of this unit, students will hopefully have a workable strategy to use if asked to write an essay in another class, and the ability to quickly outline their writing. I also work with students in this unit on following a logical argument through their writing, and defending their ideas.

Semester 3: Classic Literature study

Depending on student interest and ability, we will either do a unit on Commedia dell’arte, which is an improvised Medieval theater form, and dear to my heart, or we will study a Shakespeare play. If we choose the Shakespeare play, we will read a play by Shakespeare, and discuss his use of language and meter, character, and staging. We will read the play as a class, using a modern English “translation” to support our study. At the end of the semester, we will see the play performed at the American Shakespeare Center in Staunton, and participate in one of their workshops, specifically created to support study of the play we’ve chosen.



History

As I have taught history over the past few years, I have found the need to really go into the basics of why governments exist, how they came to be, and what functions they serve. I also have needed to do this for economics. Students often don't have a firm grasp of what money is, where it comes from, and how it relates to trade. This history curriculum also happens to address the Virginia SOL's for seventh grade that cover these same topics in civics and economics.

This course will move from the personal out to the societal expressions of laws and trade. We will start with the origins of law in interpersonal and familial rules, e.g. "don't hit your brother" and "don't take things that don't belong to you". From there, we will expand our understanding of law into the community level, and into the larger history of law in Medieval Europe, and then into the Enlightenment and into modern American government. During each unit, we will look at the origins of law, and how those ideas have come to express themselves in American government. We will similarly look at trade-based economies in the middle ages, and how that has evolved into the modern American economy.

Unit 1: What is Money?

In order to really understand most of human history, and peoples' interactions with each other, we first need to understand how people generate, track, and trade the things they need to not only survive, but to thrive. We will discuss how money and trade work, and how they shifted and developed over time. We will be using *The History of Money* by Martin Jenkins as our main text for this unit. Each week we will look at a "big question" about money, and use a variety of board games and activities to illustrate the ideas we are discussing.

Unit 2: What is Law?

Groups of people of any size usually make rules for themselves to help their family, group, community, or country run smoothly. These rules and laws can be simple or complex, and help a community define what is important to them, and how they would like the members of that community to conduct themselves. These rules or laws have an enormous impact on how the people in that community conduct themselves, and how they interact with other communities. During this unit, we will be reading *Law for Beginners* written by Rose Hall and Lara Bryan.

Unit 3: The Laws and Economics of Colonial Trade (With Pirates! 🏴‍☠️)

During this unit, we will be applying some of the large concepts we have been studying all year to a specific time period. We will be looking at the period from roughly 1700-1750, with an emphasis on the 1720's. We will be getting a sense of the legal and economic relationship between England and its colonies, and how the thriving practice of smuggling and piracy arose from within that rigid, and one-sided colonial structure.



Math

I have been teaching and tutoring math students for over 20 years, since I was a high school student, and I love to find creative pathways toward understanding for each individual student. I can teach math starting at any level, and moving up through Algebra II.

I tend to teach my math students individually, unless there is enough compatibility to teach it in a very small group of two or three students. I use the “Big Ideas” Math book series (Their website is here: [Big Ideas Math](#)), which is based on Common Core, and has a nice mix of visual and verbal explanations for the concepts. For students that prefer auditory input over visual, the website linked above has an audio recording of the entirety of all of their books.

In 2023-24, I will be offering an in-person Algebra I small group class after class on either Tuesday or Thursday, depending on how my childcare situation shakes out. If your child is ready for Algebra I, please let me know. If you are unsure, I have written a pre-algebra final exam that I gave to my students this year. You are welcome to take a look at it to see if your child would be ready to join this group next year.

If your child is not in Algebra I, but you would like to do math with me, please let me know. I have some very limited math tutoring spots available for next year, which can be done in person, or over zoom.

Students will receive a copy or pdf of my written notes for each lesson. I usually assign around 30 problems for each week’s homework, and tend to cover around two or three sections of the book each week. If the students keep up with their work, we tend to have plenty of time to finish the book during the school year.



Pricing Structure

My program is 34 weeks long, starting in September, and usually going through the end of May. The tuition is based on the 34 weeks divided into 9 monthly payments. There is a \$200 deposit due during the summer as a deposit to secure your place in the program, and will be credited toward your last month's tuition. I am happy to offer sibling discounts if needed, and once I hit a certain number of students committed to the program, will be willing to discuss trades or need-based discounts. Please don't hesitate to ask about a different payment plan, or an additional discount. It's been a rough few years.

The pricing per month is as follows:

One subject: \$240/month

Two subjects: \$456/month (5% discount)

Three subjects: \$648/month (10% discount)