

CHARLOTTE MASON

your   
way

FORM 1  
GUIDE

A CHARLOTTE MASON PLENARY



# **CHARLOTTE MASON YOUR WAY FORM 1 GUIDE**

**A CHARLOTTE MASON PLENARY**

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# Introduction

## FORM 1 GUIDE

Thank you for choosing A CHARLOTTE MASON PLENARY! And welcome to a Charlotte Mason education, a method that truly honors the child as a person and brings ease and joy to homeschooling.

This Guide lists each subject in Form 1, books that were used, notes on each subject, and scheduling information. My goal is to help you design a personalized “Charlotte Mason Your Way” curriculum that fits your family.

**There are 3 steps to this guide:**

**STEP #1: OVERVIEW OF FORM SUBJECTS**

**STEP #2: THE CHARLOTTE MASON YOUR WAY QUIZ**

**STEP #3: YOUR CUSTOM SCHEDULE**

**STEP #1: AN OVERVIEW OF FORM SUBJECTS:** Step #1 will give you information on which subjects were taught and which books Charlotte chose for her students.

My source information for this guide comes from analyzing more than 10 years worth of Charlotte Mason’s original PNEU Programmes from 1920-1933. These Programmes list the curriculum used by students in the PNEU Schools.

All of Charlotte’s Programmes are divided by Form. Forms are like grade levels, but they allow for more flexibility in meeting the educational needs of a child. Forms are elastic, allowing the teacher to stretch or contract the amount and difficulty of work based on a child’s ability and needs.

Form 1 roughly correlates with U.S. Grades 1-3:

**Form 1B = Grade 1**

**Form 1A = Grades 2 and 3**

*“The child of six goes into [Form 1B]; he works for 2½ hours a day, but half an hour of this time is spent in drill and games. Including drill, he has thirteen ‘subjects’ of study, for which about sixteen books are used.” (Vol. 3, pg 272)*

*“In [Form 1A], the children are usually between seven and eight, but may be nine. They have fifteen ‘subjects’ (perhaps twenty-three books).” (Vol. 3, pg 275)*

For more information on Forms, please see [Understanding Forms in a Charlotte Mason Education](#).

This guide is a compilation of information taken from many Programmes. I have included what is most consistent throughout the Programmes. In most subjects, I have listed books that Charlotte actually used. Whenever possible, each title will be linked to an in-print edition and/or a public domain version for your convenience.

I have included this information to help you in selecting your own books. Viewing the actual book that Charlotte used for a given subject will give you an insight into why she chose it, what makes it a

living book, what makes it appropriate for this age range, and what to look for in choosing a modern equivalent. I have also listed a few books that I personally recommend. To see additional living books recommendations, please see the [CM SUBJECTS](#) page.

Once you have completed the Form Overview, then move on to Step #2.

**STEP #2: THE CHARLOTTE MASON YOUR WAY QUIZ:** This is a fun exercise that will show you your strengths as a family. We want to identify those strengths and build a solid foundation on them!

You will use your results from the Quiz when you get to **Step #3: Creating Your Custom Schedule.**

Your schedule is the machine that keeps your homeschool going. Once in place, it takes all the decision work out of your day – you simply move on to the next thing on your schedule. A simple schedule is easily tweaked and improved. An overly complex schedule can be difficult to change and can become a burden. We want to keep it simple and stress-free! Less stress, more joy!

The entire process of Steps 1-3 will help set you up for ongoing success.

One more thing – I also want to encourage you to read Charlotte’s original *Home Education Series* for yourself. Her words are so inspiring and so helpful for developing the atmosphere of your home, the discipline you’ll need each day, and the beauty of the life you want to cultivate. After all, education is “an atmosphere, a discipline, a life.”

Start with Volume 1, especially since you have Form 1 students, as Volume 1 was written specifically regarding children ages six through nine. There is a wealth of advice and knowledge in it’s pages.

I recommend [THE ANNOTATED HOME EDUCATION SERIES](#) published by A CHARLOTTE MASON PLENARY of course! The annotations and additional information really help you better understand Charlotte’s words and historical context. You can purchase [HOME EDUCATION: ANNOTATED EDITION](#) (VOLUME 1) as a paperback book or as a downloadable PDF on THE PLENARY website.

Other options for learning more about the Charlotte Mason method include:

- Free 20 Principles study: [Finding Your Way with Charlotte Mason’s 20 Principles](#)
- [Online Courses](#) for Parents, including a CM 101 Course coming soon!
- Lots of free “how-to” videos on [THE PLENARY YOUTUBE CHANNEL](#)

Thank you for choosing THE PLENARY!



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**STEP #1**  
**OVERVIEW OF**  
**FORM SUBJECTS**

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## STEP #1

### *Overview of Form 1 Subjects*

#### **HISTORY – HOME COUNTRY**

REFER TO VOL. 1, PART 5, CH. 18, PAGES 280-295 / VOL. 6, PAGES 169-175

Charlotte’s students studied the history of their home country every year. All Form 1 students used a book about British history called [An Island Story](#) by H.E. Marshall. Choose a primary history spine for your home country. Options for good living books for American History include:

- a. [America First: Updated Edition](#) by Lawton Evans is an excellent history spine and it does not assume prior knowledge. Please use the UPDATED edition to avoid insensitive language in the original text (you can see the original text in the public domain [here](#)).
- b. [A History of the United States and Its People](#) by Edward Eggleston is also a good choice, but is not nearly as narrative as *America First*.
- c. [The Book of Indians](#) by Irving – if you’d rather start with an introduction to Native Americans, this book is lovely.

SAMPLE

FORM 1A

Students also read [Tales from Westminster Abbey](#) by Mrs. Frewen Lord, which appears to be a mix of history about the church and biography of people associated with the church. You can include a similar history or biography book for your Form 1A student.

See the [Form 1A page](#) for all subjects within Form 1.

Or see the [History page](#).

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#### **ORAL NARRATION / COMPOSITION**

REFER TO VOL. 1, PAGES 231-233 / VOL. 6, PAGES 190-192

All scheduled books are to be narrated except poetry.

For help with narration, see the video: [Beginning Narration](#).

Prepping the lesson can improve the quality of a student’s narrations. Recap the previous reading, introduce any new people or places in the new reading (view locations on a map), and introduce vocabulary words that your student may not understand through context. For more information, see [Plenary Pointers: Prepping a Lesson](#).

#### **TALES / LITERATURE**

REFER TO VOL. 1, APPENDICES C AND D (PLENARY ANNOTATED EDITION) / VOL. 6, PAGES 180-182

Charlotte deliberately chose stories which would inspire wonder and awe in young children.

Students began the study of mythology in Form 1 and continued reading mythology throughout the Forms. Knowledge of mythology is foundational to understanding Western Literature in later years.

See our [Literature page](#) for more options. Or see the [Form 1 page](#) for all subjects within Form 1.

#### **FORM 1B**

- a. Fairy Tales – read 3 fairy tales from Grimm’s or Hans Christian Andersen’s per term; [The Blue](#)

[Fairy Book](#) by Andrew Lang contains tales from both authors

- b. Fables – read 3 fables from [Aesop's Fables](#) per term
- c. Poetry – choose a poet or an anthology that is suitable for young children. Charlotte used anthologies such as [Fairies and Chimneys](#) (public domain text [here](#)) and [The Fairy Green](#) by Rose Fyleman. I recommend anthologies such as [A Child's Book of Poems](#) by Gyo Fujikawa or [Favorite Poems Old and New](#) by Helen Ferris.

FORM 1A

- a. Greek Mythology – students take two lessons to read [Tales of Troy and Greece](#) by Andrew Lang
- b. Christian Allegory – students read [The Pilgrim's Progress](#) by John Bunyan over the course of two years. Some parents choose to substitute with a children's version such as [The Little Pilgrim's Progress](#). If you have a different spiritual background, simply substitute a tale from your own tradition.
- c. Poetry – same as Form 1B

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#### COPYWORK AND WRITING

REFER TO VOL. 1, PAGES 234-240

Copywork begins with simple lessons on writing strokes and then individual letters. Once a student mastered every letter, he began writing sentences for copywork. Choose a sentence or two from the student's reading books. The length of each sentence will depend on how long your student will tolerate the activity of handwriting. Gradually increase the length of the selected passage to include 2-3 sentences as your student builds hand strength and confidence.

**FORM 1B** – Charlotte used [A New Handwriting](#) by Mary Monica Waterhouse Bridges. Instructions were "one letter to be mastered per lesson. Transcribe from reading books."

**FORM 1A** – Charlotte used [A New Handwriting](#) by Mary Monica Waterhouse Bridges. Instructions were "two letters to be mastered per lesson. Transcribe from reading books."

## GEOGRAPHY

REFER TO VOL. 1, PART 5, CH. 17, PAGES 272-279 / VOL. 6, PAGES 224-225

Charlotte loved the study of geography. She wrote a series of geography books which were used in schools across England. Form I students learn two types of geography: physical geography and regional (political) geography, by mapping the world. See the [Geography](#) page for more living book recommendations. Or see the [Form 1](#) page for all subjects within Form 1.

FORM 1B

- a. Physical Geography – students read their first geography book, [Geography Reader: Elementary Geography](#) (free online PDF) to study physical geography. This small book is still suitable for use today. It was first published in 1881 and, as a public domain work, it has been reprinted many times. A more updated and colorful version, it has been reprinted by Memoria Press.
- b. Regional Geography – students read travelogues with vivid stories about far off places. Choose a travelogue book you think your student will enjoy. Some books that Charlotte used were:

- [The World at Home: Pictures and Scenes from Far Off Lands](#) by Elizabeth and Mary Kirby

## FORM 1 FREQUENCY & LENGTH OF LESSONS CHART

ESSENTIAL SUBJECTS	MAX LENGTH	REPEAT	AM PM	L/R BRAIN	OTHER SUBJECTS	MAX LENGTH	REPEAT	AM PM	L/R BRAIN
COPYWORK	20 min.	3x week	AM	R	HISTORY TALES	30 min.	1x week	AM	
TALES / LITERATURE	20 min.	2x week	AM		BIBLE / RELIGIOUS STUDY	20 min.	4x week	AM	
HISTORY - HOME COUNTRY	30 min.	1x week	AM	L	GEOGRAPHY - PHYSICAL	10 min.	1x week	AM	R
SCIENCE - NATURE LORE	20 min.	1x week	AM	L	GEOGRAPHY - REGIONAL	10 min.	1x week	AM	R
MATH	20 min.	6x week	AM	R	SCIENCE - SUBJECT LESSON	10 min.	1x week	AM	R
PLAY	10 min.	5x week	AM	L	SCIENCE - TOPIC	10 min.	1x week	AM	R
READING INSTRUCTION	10 min.	6x week	AM	L	FOREIGN LANGUAGE	15 min.	1x week	AM	R
JOY SUBJECTS	MAX LENGTH	REPEAT	AM PM	L/R BRAIN	FOREIGN LANGUAGE SONG	15 min.	1x week	AM	L
POETRY	10 min.	5x week	PM	R	RECITATION	10 min.	3x week	AM	R
SCIENCE - NATURE STUDY	30	1x week	PM	R	MUSICAL INSTRUMENT			PM	R
SINGING / SOL-FEA	15	2x week	AM	L					
DRILL / EXERCISE		3x week	AM						
WORK / HANDICRAFTS	20	4x week	AM						
MUSICAL INSTRUMENT			PM						
PICTURE STUDY	20 min.	1x every other week	PM	L					
COMPOSER STUDY		1x every other week	PM	L					
DRAWING	30 min.	3x week	PM						

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**APPENDIX**  
**CHARLOTTE MASON'S**  
**20 PRINCIPLES**

**CHARLOTTE MASON YOUR WAY**  
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# Charlotte Mason's

## 20 PRINCIPLES

**PRINCIPLE #1:** Children are born persons.

**PRINCIPLE #2:** They are not born either good or bad, but with possibilities for good and for evil.

**PRINCIPLE #3:** The principles of authority on the one hand, and of obedience on the other, are natural, necessary and fundamental; but –

**PRINCIPLE #4:** These principles are limited by the respect due to the personality of children, which must not be encroached upon, whether by the direct use of fear or love, suggestion or influence, or by undue play upon any one natural desire.

**PRINCIPLE #5:** Therefore, we are limited to three educational instruments – the atmosphere of environment, the discipline of habit, and the presentation of living ideas. The P.N.E.U. Motto is: “Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, and a life.”

**PRINCIPLE #6:** When we say that “*education is an atmosphere,*” we do not mean that a child should be isolated in what may be called a ‘child-environment’ especially adapted and prepared, but that we should take into account the educational value of his natural home atmosphere, both as regards persons and things, and should let him live freely among his proper conditions. It stultifies a child to bring down his world to the ‘child’s’ level.

**PRINCIPLE #7:** By “*education is a discipline,*” we mean the discipline of habits, formed definitely and thoughtfully, whether habits of mind or body. Physiologists tell us of the adaptation of brain structures to habitual lines of thought, i.e., to our habits.

**PRINCIPLE #8:** In saying that “*education is a life,*” the need of intellectual and moral as well as of physical sustenance is implied. The mind feeds on ideas, and therefore children should have a generous curriculum.

**PRINCIPLE #9:** We hold that the child’s mind is no mere *sac* to hold ideas; but is rather, if the figure may be allowed, a spiritual *organism*, with an appetite for all knowledge. This is its proper diet, with which it is prepared to deal; and which it can digest and assimilate as the body does foodstuffs.

**PRINCIPLE #10:** Such a doctrine as *e.g.* the Herbartian, that the mind is a receptacle, lays the stress of Education (the preparation of knowledge in enticing morsels duly ordered) upon the teacher. Children taught on this principle are in danger of receiving much teaching with little knowledge; and the teacher’s axiom is “what a child learns matters less than how he learns it.”

**PRINCIPLE #11:** But we, believing that the normal child has powers of mind which fit him to deal with all knowledge proper to him, give him a full and generous curriculum; taking care only that all knowledge offered him is vital, that is, that facts are not presented without their informing ideas. Out of this conception comes our principle that –

**PRINCIPLE #12:** “*Education is the Science of Relations*”; that is, that a child has natural relations with a vast number of things and thoughts: so we train him upon physical exercises, nature lore, handicrafts, science and art, and upon *many living books*, for we know that our business is not to teach him all about anything, but to help him to make valid as many as may be of –

“Those first-born affinities that fit our new existence to existing things.”

**PRINCIPLE #13:** In devising a Syllabus for a normal child, of whatever social class, three points must be considered:

- (a) He requires *much* knowledge, for the mind needs sufficient food as much as does the body.
- (b) The knowledge should be various, for sameness in mental diet does not create appetite (*i.e.*, curiosity).
- (c) Knowledge should be communicated in well-chosen language because his attention responds naturally to what is conveyed in literary form.

**PRINCIPLE #14:** As knowledge is not assimilated until it is reproduced, children should ‘tell back’ after a single reading or hearing, or should write on some part of what they have read.

**PRINCIPLE #15:** A *single reading* is insisted on because children have naturally great power of attention; but this force is dissipated by the re-reading of passages, and also, by questioning, summarizing, and the like.

Acting upon these and some other points in the behavior of mind, we find that *the educability of children is enormously greater than has hitherto been supposed* and is but little dependent on such circumstances as heredity and environment.

Nor is the accuracy of this statement limited to clever children or to children of the educated classes: thousands of children in Elementary Schools respond freely to this method, which is based on the *behavior of mind*.

**PRINCIPLE #16:** There are two guides to moral and intellectual self-management to offer to children, which we may call “the way of the will” and “the way of the reason.”

**PRINCIPLE #17:** *The way of the will:* Children should be taught

- (a) to distinguish between “I want” and “I will.”
- (b) That the way to will effectively is to turn our thoughts from that which we desire but do not will.
- (c) That the best way to turn our thoughts is to think of or do some quite different thing, entertaining or interesting.
- (d) That after a little rest in this way, the will returns to its work with new vigor.

(This adjunct of the will is familiar to us as *diversion*, whose office it is to ease us for a time from will effort, that we may ‘will’ again with added power. The use of *suggestion* as an aid to the will *is to be deprecated*, as tending to stultify and stereotype character. It would seem that spontaneity is a condition of development, and that human nature needs the discipline of failure as well as of success.)

**PRINCIPLE #18:** *The way of reason:* We teach children, too, not to “lean (too confidently) to their own understanding”; because the function of reason is to give logical demonstration (a) of mathematical

truth, (b) of an initial idea, accepted by the will. In the former case, reason is, practically, an infallible guide, but in the latter, it is not always a safe one; for, whether that idea be right or wrong, reason will confirm it by irrefragable proofs.

**PRINCIPLE #19:** Therefore, children should be taught, as they become mature enough to understand such teaching, that the chief responsibility which rests on them as *persons* is the acceptance or rejection of ideas. To help them in this choice we give them principles of conduct, and a wide range of the knowledge fitted to them. These principles should save children from some of the loose thinking and heedless action which cause most of us to live at a lower level than we need.

**PRINCIPLE #20:** We allow no separation to grow up between the intellectual and 'spiritual' life of children, but teach them that the Divine Spirit has constant access to their spirits, and is their continual Helper in all the interests, duties and joys of life.

Join us for a free 20 Principles Study here: [\*Finding Your Way with Charlotte Mason's 20 Principles\*](#)

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Hi! I'm **RACHEL LEBOWITZ**, the owner of **A CHARLOTTE MASON PLENARY**. My husband and I have always homeschooled our two children using the Charlotte Mason method of education. I have a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Houston where I studied Communications and Political Science. Before college, I traveled as a member of Up With People, a performing arts organization with a mission to transcend cultural barriers and create global understanding through music. After college, I spent many years as a Radio and Television Journalist. I currently live in Texas with my husband, two children, two dogs, and one guinea pig.

### OTHER BOOKS & RESOURCES BY THE AUTHOR

#### THE ANNOTATED HOME EDUCATION SERIES

*Home Education: Annotated Edition (Volume 1)*

by Charlotte Mason, Rachel Lebowitz, and Ruk Martin

*A Philosophy of Education: Annotated Edition (Volume 6)*

by Charlotte Mason and Rachel Lebowitz

(Other Annotated Volumes by Charlotte Mason coming soon)

#### THE PLENARY PLUTARCH SERIES

*Plutarch's Life of Publicola: Annotated Study Guide*

by Plutarch and Rachel Lebowitz

*Plutarch's Life of Pericles: Annotated Study Guide*

by Plutarch and Rachel Lebowitz

*Plutarch's Life of Julius Caesar: Annotated Study Guide*

by Plutarch and Rachel Lebowitz

(More Plutarch Guides coming soon)

#### LIVING BOOKS

*America First: Updated Edition*

by Lawton Evans and Rachel Lebowitz

#### CHARLOTTE MASON COURSES

*Volume 6 Companion Course*

*CM 101 Course*

*Finding Your Way with Charlotte Mason's 20 Principles*