



The Ultimate Guide to Homeschooling

Debra Bell , Michael Farris (Foreword)

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Now with updated lists of available resource materials and the latest information on homeschooling technology, this manual is your access guide to homeschooling-maximizing family life while providing a quality education for children. With wit and wisdom gleaned from years of experience, Debra Bell sets forth a compelling vision for the joys of home-based learning and the essential tools for success. The Ultimate Guide to Homeschooling is a great tool for those who are merely thinking about homeschooling, as well as for veteran homeschoolers.

The Ultimate Guide to Homeschooling Details

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From Reader Review The Ultimate Guide to Homeschooling for online ebook

Wendy says

This will be a good reference for the upcoming years.

Suzanne says

Well, this did not get off to a promising start as right off the bat the author tells us not to even bother trying to home educate without the guidance of the Lord. Of course, navigating the largely Christian homeschool universe as an atheist is nothing new and I've got a very thick skin about it but this seemed more insistent than usual. Still, I soldiered on because I really needed some guidance and this had gotten such great reviews.

What a wealth of information! Not to mention meticulously organized, easy to read, and brutally honest about how challenging the next four years might be. I had just finished another book on the same topic that was incredibly disappointing and I was really hoping that wasn't typical of the genre. I feel well informed now and the information contained just in the appendices makes this book worth the cost of admission.

Yes, there is a Christian theme throughout but the author is never self-righteous and seemingly without effort so it never feels "packaged" for a "wider audience". There is an authenticity to the viewpoint that is not sacrificed for the sake of consumerism. I find that easy enough to navigate.

This is actually a great book for any parent of a middle schooler looking to plot a course for their child's academic future. But for a homeschooler it is really an invaluable tool. Get one.

Jen says

I have been surprised this year to realize that my tendencies as a public school teacher very much carry over to my homeschool environment. When I was a public school teacher, every year, around Valentine's day, I would hit the wall. I would feel unsuccessful, stressed and burdened down with things that weren't working. The same has proved true this year, even though my teaching platform has moved to my house. In years past, I would look at my current plan, identify what was or wasn't working and then begin implementing immediate changes, and identifying changes which need to be made for the following year. I also found that taking time to learn something for myself helped me to recharge my batteries. This book gave me some fresh perspectives on homeschooling and helped with my personal recharge. There was great satisfaction and enjoyment in learning about new resources and being remind of ones I already knew about. with it's help, I am working towards and wonderful next year.

Christina says

This book is the most helpful I've seen on the topic of 7th-12th grades. The first few chapters are the author's insights on why to homeschool teens, learning styles and overall skills to learn. This was helpful information but won't be applicable in every situation. The section I needed was middle school, which explains the foundation needed for high school. The high school sections by subject were next, as well as dual enrollment and college entry info. The appendix is impressive, with college application examples, and recommended curriculum and sources for almost everything in the book. Debra Bell has over 20 years experience in this area and it shows!

I would recommend this book to any parent (not just homeschoolers) who wants to understand better the middle school and high school track, as you always want to begin with the end in mind. If your child plans to go to a competitive college, decisions made in 7th grade will affect high school coursework, particularly for math. This book also has a ton of extra resource ideas, which would be great if you have a student who is ahead and needs extra challenge.

I give this 4 stars only because a lot of the info is regional (Debra is from PA) and you must look into the rules in your own state on your own for high school credit requirements and dual enrollment rules.

Margaret Chind says

The copy I read was orange. I'm not sure what edition it was, pub Apologia November 2009. I am glad I read it, I'm not sure if I need a copy to own. This one is a library book. I need to write down all my thoughts later...

Nikki Powers says

Started reading this a year ago; I will be referring to this book a lot in the next several years.

Elaine says

This book really covers a lot of ground, from deciding whether or not to homeschool(advantages and challenges), to learning style, curriculum, tips for not getting burnt out, homeschooling teens, guidelines for when to teach things for each subject, lots of recommended resources. It's written from a Christian perspective, but even if the reader is not a Christian, there are a lot of practical tips.

Debbie Phillips says

I stopped reading this book. I finished most of it so I am counting it. In the later chapters on High School and

preparing your children for college I started to feel like I was giving my children an inferior education, just because I did not do things her way. There is no balance in this book on the many choices for homeschoolers, like starting your own business after high school. Also she very much recommends outside classes, and even started a homeschool school to avail her kids of other teachers in their lives. We have a few, similar, one day a week schools for homeschoolers in our area, but chose not to go that route. Because this book negatively affected my view of myself and our homeschool I chose to stop reading it. Others may find it helpful. Most of the information in the first 21 chapters was review for me... nothing new at all. I received this book as a review item a while back and never finished reading it. As I said the beginning was ok and if you advocate outside classes for your children and sending them to college then this book may help you, but it didn't help me.

I am grateful to my grown daughters and husband who helped me put things in perspective and encouraged me to stop reading this book.

Now to take a little break from reading about homeschooling and read just for pleasure... then in a week or 2 I will read a homeschool book that encourages me and does not make me feel guilty because I don't do things the way the author does them.

Just my 2 cents... take it or leave it.

Julie King says

I consider this book to be the Bible of homeschooling. Bell covers everything from standardized tests, curriculum choices, creating transcripts, preventing burnout, support systems, field trips, and even getting homeschoolers admitted into college.

Bell is a Christian and there is a heavy amount of Christian leaning, but you can also skip over those parts if you so choose. I think Bell gives great ideas that can be used by non-traditional homeschoolers who seek out opportunities to provide additional educational opportunities outside of their traditional school experience. Even if you choose not to read the entire book, it is a fantastic reference book for curriculum options, homeschooling organizations state-by-state, and even what books you can use for various grade levels.

Jen says

Bell's book is well organized and easy to read. It is full of information from a parent who home educated 4 children through high school. The author speaks from personal experience as a parent, teacher, and someone who helped start and maintain a home school coop. The only thing that was off putting at times is that the author incorporates her Christian religious beliefs into the book. The description of the book doesn't disclose this so I was a little taken aback at first and I wasn't sure if the book would be relevant for me. I'm glad I kept reading though because as I said earlier there is a lot of helpful information. The resource lists at the end are also great.

Joselle173 says

A decent book with loads of references, compilations of useful information on hsing curriculums, etc. and

was thankfully written by someone who wasn't out to convince the reader that all homeschoolers never have problems, which was refreshing. I got a lot out of this book, and would recommend it be on any beginner homeschooling family's bookshelf.

Sharon says

This was a hard book for me to rate, there was some excellent teaching advice, but there was also constant Christian religious instruction - which would have been more acceptable if it had been the "Ultimate Christian Guide to Homeschooling." I read the whole thing because I found some good tidbits, but I was disturbed by some areas like her husband's yearly review of her homeschooling and marriage. In some books, I might have felt this was a teasing way to look at the discussion, but in the context of this book, it really seemed like she felt he was in charge of her and evaluating her. There were also lots of mentions to "Biblical discipline" which at first I didn't know what she meant by until I realized it was a euphemism for spanking. Which she says is necessary, but was also defensive about. She also made it very clear that it should be the mothers homeschooling and all mothers should be home. Personally, I believe it is a chose in every family and if they choose to have a parent stay home this can be any parent. She also gets political in places when I was just looking for homeschool tips, not her political beliefs.

The author seems like a very good teacher and mother and I felt like I not only learned a few homeschooling tips but got insight into the thoughts of evangelical home educators (especially that religion was their main purpose for homeschooling.) So realizing how much I learned about others viewpoints made me reflect and raise my rating overall.

Libby says

I could have sworn I already reviewed this book...

Overall, it was a good resource, BUT I still feel a bit lost and overwhelmed. It sounds like she relied on a local group quite heavily, and I'm not sure there is one here that I want to rely on. I admit, I still have some prejudices about the types of kids who are homeschooled, because most of the ones I knew growing up were... weird. BUT as it becomes more mainstream, I realize there are more normal people taking it on, and it's likely there will be people my kids would have a lot in common with, in the homeschooling communities.

I was really surprised by how Christian-focused she was, which turned me off a bit (despite being Christian) because that has nothing to do with why I want to homeschool. For me it's all academic. i.e. I think the public school system is failing and won't be enough for particularly my oldest. (especially because he does best with one-on-one attention, which he will not get in public school.)

She lists a lot of great resources that I wish were on the internet as links. It would make most sense that way.

This is quite an old book, and it was very funny to hear her talk about modems, dial-up areas, and VHS. haha. But it also kind of shows how ahead of her time she may have been. I like that she embraces technology.

I bought this book used for 50 cents, so I'll probably keep it around as a resource. I'm not sure it would

necessarily be "homeschooling cannon" though.

Ami says

This is probably the best homeschooling book I've read to date (and I've read ALOT). The book is an actual guide through the process of deciding to homeschool, what you need to homeschool, and lesson-planning for homeschool. Debra Bell is the first homeschooling author that has the guts to publish the downside to homeschooling and some of its ugly side effects on the mom.

This book is a very realistic look at homeschooling with great information and tons of additional resources listed. I may actually need to buy this book.

Jennifer says

Still relatively new to homeschooling, this book looked like it might have answers to all of my questions. But having home-schooled just long enough to know what works for me and my family, "The Ultimate Guide to Homeschooling" felt like an ultimate guilt trip. I don't do things the way the author does them, and I think that's okay. She does list some very excellent resources, from curriculum to books to state and national homeschooling organizations.
