

# THE EPOCH TIMES

# LIFE &

# TRADITION

PUBLIC DOMAIN



Although his reputation was assailed that winter by his enemies within the army, George Washington receives the lion's share of the credit not only for holding his troops together but also for improving their battlefield capabilities. "Washington and Lafayette at Valley Forge," 1907, by John Ward Dunsmore.

INSPIRATION

## WINTER WARRIORS



Some lessons from the devoted patriots at Valley Forge can put some steel in our spines as we face our own struggles

JEFF MINICK

Christmas 2022 will be long remembered for the savage winter storm that struck much of the United States.

Buffalo, New York, saw four feet of snow and deadly low temperatures. A friend in Minneapolis-St. Paul told me that the weather service there once cheerily reported that the temperature would climb to 6 degrees the following day. Cities and towns around the nation suffered power outages and broken water lines.

In Northeastern Pennsylvania, where I spent Christmas with my daughter and her family, the thermometer registered single digits for nearly three days. One morning, coming back into the house, I wondered about the temperatures in the winter of 1777-78 at Valley Forge, which was less than two hours away. I searched online and found that the troops of George Washington had contended at times with

weather nearly as frigid as our own.

Now, the 140-year-old house my daughter and her husband rent is a bit drafty on Christmas, but the fireplace with its blower pumped out the heat, and the radiators did their duty. The kitchen held an abundance of food and drink, the showers and sinks ran hot water, the grandkids played with their gifts, and we slept warm and well in the frozen nights.

Things were different for Washington's army.

**'That Dismal Abode'**

In "Valley Forge," authors Robert Drury and Tom Clavin paint some vivid pictures of life in that winter encampment, which essentially became the fourth-largest American city of the time. In the snow and subfreezing temperatures, soldiers often lacked blankets, coats, socks, and shoes, so much so that they left a bloody trail on the drill ground.

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## Faith Helps Couple Through Recovery Journey After Car Crash

When a former Navy SEAL was severely injured in a car crash, his wife stood by him through years of recovery

LOUISE CHAMBERS

A North Carolina couple was faced with the ultimate test of love and loyalty when the husband, a former Navy SEAL, suffered a traumatic brain injury in a car crash. His wife became his primary caregiver and biggest champion, leaning on their shared faith for the strength to believe recovery was possible.

Five years on, veteran Jonathan Neal

Grant, 41, has made more gains than anyone thought possible.

Jon and his wife, Laura Browning Grant, 38, live in Raleigh with their dog, Kiah. The couple met through online dating in 2008, married four years later, and enjoyed five years of wedded bliss before their lives were upturned in an instant.

In 2017, Jon Grant was a passenger in a massive car crash just two miles from their home.

**The Accident**

"Jon and a guy he worked with went to dinner after work," Laura Grant told The Epoch Times, "and on their way back home the driver lost control, the car struck a ditch at high speed, overturned, went airborne,

and hit a tree."

Jon was taken to the Level 1 Trauma Center at Raleigh's WakeMed in critical condition.

"When I received the call, all I was told was my husband was 'unresponsive,' and I needed to get to the hospital right away. It felt like eternity until I got to lay eyes on him," Laura said.

When Laura arrived at the hospital, Jon was in a coma. He had visible injuries: a gash on his nose, a cut over his left eye, and blood in his mouth. Laura was told there were two major bleeds in Jon's brain, and he needed a bolt placed in his skull to monitor the pressure.

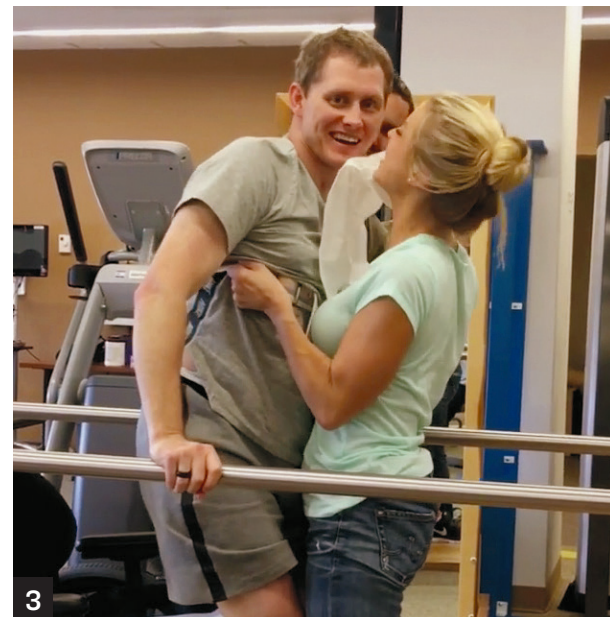
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COURTESY OF LAURA BROWNING GRANT



Jon and Laura Grant at their wedding.





## Faith Helps Couple Through Recovery Journey After Car Crash

Continued from Page 1

"The first day post-injury, I whispered into Jon's ear that if it was too much, and God's will, that he didn't need to hold on for me," Laura said. "But if he did stay, we would fight together ... by God's grace, after a handful of days watching the monitors as he laid in a coma, the bolt was removed."

Doctors had to wait for Jon's brain swelling

to subside before he could be laid flat for an MRI scan. After the scan and a meeting with Jon's doctors, reality set in for Laura; there were clear signs of brain damage and shearing of Jon's brain stem, meaning there was a strong chance he would never wake up.

Laura fell apart. "I trashed out of the meeting," she said, "my mom was walking down the hall. I lost it. I sobbed and fell into my mom's arms. To this

1. Jon and Laura Grant at the hospital.

2. Jon Grant was unresponsive and went into a coma after the car crash.

3. Laura Grant says her husband has come a long way since his accident, adding that he's a man with a "strong foundation of faith."

4. Jon Grant continues to heal every day.

day, I vividly remember that moment."

### 'Faith Is Everything'

With so many uncertainties, Laura felt out of control. Faith became everything.

"It takes full surrender, trust, prayer, and hope to know that God has a bigger plan," she said. "Faith is everything."

Laura, who is a Pilates instructor, accompanied her husband through intense physical and cognitive therapies, both at the hospital and at home, keeping the spring in her step and a smile on her face even when progress was slow. She drew inspiration from her work in Pilates to manage her own stress and keep her body strong enough to lift Jon's 200-pound weight, while also helping him work his mind and body in symbiosis.

Many families of brain injury patients are told healing will take place six months to a year post-injury, Laura said. It wasn't until



Conditions were dismal at Valley Forge, with many soldiers going without blankets, coats, socks, or shoes in the snow and subfreezing temperatures. "The March to Valley Forge, December 19, 1777," 1883, by William B. T.rego.

### INSPIRATION

## Winter Warriors

Continued from Page 1

They were quartered in cold, primitive huts with fires that blackened the air with smoke. They frequently subsisted on a mixture of flour and water they called "firecakes"—hard, blackened biscuits. With little beef or pork, the dead maggots and weevils in the flour were often their only protein. Even by the standards of the time, medical care for the sick—and there were many sick—was abysmal, and poor sanitation practices felled hundreds of soldiers as well. Of the 12,000 soldiers who occupied that winter camp, nearly 2,000 had died of disease and privation by the time spring arrived.

Not all of them stuck it out that long. Deserter numbers that winter were rampant, reaching such numbers that Washington ordered multiple daily roll calls to keep track of his soldiers.

But what, I wondered, of the men who remained loyal to the American cause? What

caused them to stay the course despite these deplorable conditions? And might we learn some things from their ordeal that could put some steel in our spines in our own battles?

### Leadership

Although his reputation was assailed that winter by his enemies within the army, George Washington receives the lion's share of the credit not only for holding his troops together but also for improving their battlefield capabilities. With the help of foreigners such as Marquis de Lafayette and especially Baron von Steuben, who taught these citizen-soldiers the basics of drill and battlefield maneuvers, these patriots emerged from the trials of that winter disciplined and fit for war.

In our own troubles of 2023—given the events of the previous year, we can guess that the weather will be the least of our worries—our homes and workplaces will also benefit from strong leaders: calm and

capable men and women who keep their heads about them, exude a cautious optimism, and instill in those around them the confidence to weather whatever storms may come.

That's Lesson No. 1: In whatever capacity, whether as the parents of small children or the manager of a branch bank, we should seek to inspire hope in those in our charge.

### Service to Others

At Valley Forge, there were roughly 400 women, camp followers of all sorts. Some wives accompanied their husbands to this bleak place. Other women, among them Native Americans and African Americans, both slave and free, sold goods as sutlers, laundered and mended clothes, cooked, and comforted the sick. Fifty-six-year-old Sarah Alexander, the wife of Maj. Gen. William Alexander, even helped put together a production of "Cato," a play beloved by Washington, to rouse the morale of the men.

Among these gallant females was Martha Washington, George Washington's wife, who managed his household, arranged important dinners, and most of all lifted the spirits of the officers with her presence and kindness.

When bad things happen, from a sudden medical emergency to dire news about the economy, we would do well to emulate these women in their devotion and care for others. A discouraged spouse, an employer struggling to keep his business up and running, an aging parent, or a mixed-up teen—all these and more need our presence and attention.

Lesson No. 2: When friends or family members are hurting, it's time to rally around and bandage their wounds.

### Comradery

Many of those Valley Forge troopers had known one another long before enlisting in the cause of liberty. They were friends and neighbors who now drilled, ate, and slept together as comrades in arms. The boys and men in those bleak circumstances surely found some solace in knowing that their comrades would care for them if they fell

sick or would console them on the arrival of bad news from home.

In our own times of trouble, we can take from those men a lesson summed up by poet John Donne in this line: "No man is an island." A woman I know recently lost her beloved husband. Rallying around her were her siblings, some old friends, and a score of people from her church. That support has helped carry her through her grief.

Lesson No. 3: Maintain and strengthen personal relationships.

### A Cause to Fight For

Those soldiers and other patriots of the American Revolution fought for various reasons. For example, some of Washington's men joined up for the wages offered or for a change in their circumstances. Some fought because the British army was in their backyard, so to speak, and they felt they had little choice other than resistance.

## When friends or family members are hurting, it's time to rally around and bandage their wounds.

But many also believed they were fighting for their liberties and to establish a new country. This vision of a new and vibrant future led them forward, like the pillars of cloud and fire that guided the Hebrews during their desert exodus.

They may not recognize themselves as such, but many Americans are freedom fighters. In the face of government regulations and a broken economy, they open new businesses. Confronted by a "woke" culture, they battle for their children's rights to a sound education. Mired in a culture of relativism, they work hard, honor their marriage vows, seek the true and reject the false, and live upright, moral lives.

Lesson No. 4: Like those winter patriots long ago, we—you and I—are the makers and protectors of our liberties.

two years post-injury that Jon made gains, and even then, there were setbacks.

Laura said: "Up until a year ago, Jon was very interactive with others and enjoyed doing physical therapy with me. But, the past year has been a struggle. Even though we have seen many doctors, we still have no answers ... we are constantly working through unknowns and praying for answers."

Today, Jon is entirely dependent upon Laura, his full-time caregiver, advocate, and voice. It's the couple's trust and love for each, and Laura's God-led intuition into Jon's condition and his needs that is, slowly but surely, leading them toward recovery.

## When Laura arrived at the hospital, Jon was in a coma.

Jon's biggest ongoing challenge is expressive aphasia, a partial loss of the ability to speak and write. But Laura celebrates every small victory. Two moving clips of Jon talking to his wife, filmed a year apart and shared on Instagram, prove that progress is possible; in one, Jon speaks but makes little sense, while in the other he can hold a conversation.

"He has never been a man of many words, but when he did talk it was important to listen," Laura told The Epoch Times. "Through the consistency of being together every day, and connection on such a deep soul level, Jon and I have a way of communicating, a connection that is hard to put into words."

Laura describes her husband as a "gentle soul" with "unbelievable willpower," and just as strong, smart, and devout as he was before his accident. She implores others in her same position to stand strong and steady, insisting that "the best medicine is love."

Jon continues to heal every day. Laura chooses to see the good in their life circumstance and hopes their story will inspire others. She is grateful that having to think of her spouse before herself has encouraged her out of individualistic thinking, and has made her faith stronger than ever before.

She said, "I would say God has worked through me. He prepared me for this journey, and I am committed to stand by Jon. This journey is nothing I could have ever imagined. God has created each of us in such a beautiful, unique way, and he is able to do the unimaginable if we step back and allow him.

"I have found many times I want to control the situation. But it is in those moments I must surrender and be willing and able to hear and do God's will.

"I don't feel God is done with Jon."

### Stepping Up to Our Challenges

Our admiration for those troops at Valley Forge may leave us wondering whether we have the sand to measure up to their heroism. After all, we're not living in smoke-clouded huts, food is readily available for most Americans, and none are forced to walk the city sidewalks barefooted and leaving a trail of blood in the snow.

Yet we face challenges, tests of character, and circumstances unimaginable to those figures from 250 years ago. Technology, big government, and the reigning philosophy of relativism have broken down the families and communities which comforted our patriot ancestors. A decades-long torrent of federal laws and directives, more restrictive by far than any of those issued by Britain's King George III, burden the American people with regulations and taxes. Our current typhoon of drug deaths, illegal immigration, lawlessness, censorship, confused sexual mores, and cultural collapse affects all of us, whether directly or indirectly.

So let's not allow our admiration for our ancestors to become a contest of comparisons. Instead, let's look to those devoted patriots as reminders that great odds can be overcome, that failure isn't an option, and that winter itself eventually gives way to spring.

Jeff Minick lives and writes in Front Royal, Virginia. He is the author of two novels, "Amanda Bell" and "Dust on Their Wings," and two works of nonfiction, "Learning as I Go" and "Movies Make the Man."



From Valley Forge to today, Americans are not strangers to severe winter storms and the hardships that come with them.



Ernie Pyle eating "C" rations as a war correspondent in Italy on March 18, 1944.



As a war correspondent, Ernie Pyle was determined to go with the Marines if he was going to write about their experiences.

### HISTORY

## Ernie Pyle: The G.I.'s Buddy

World War II's most beloved war correspondent represented the American soldier

J.D. HAINES

A monument stands on Ie Shima (now known as Iejima), off the coast of Okinawa's main island, honoring a man who fought in World War II with a pen rather than a rifle. His name was Ernie Pyle, a U.S. journalist who found his calling as the preeminent war correspondent of World War II. Pyle was beloved by the troops he wrote about and earned the nickname "The G.I.'s Buddy."

From 1940 until his death in 1945, Pyle riveted the nation with his personal, straight-from-the-heart tales about hometown soldiers fighting in history's greatest conflict. Pyle's success was due to his ability to immerse himself in the day-to-day world of an infantryman and write about him better than anyone. Pyle's popularity was due to his ability to write from the perspective of the common soldier, explaining how the war affected the man rather than focusing on things such as troop movements. A successful newspaperman and columnist before the war, the one-time Indiana farm boy found his true calling as a combat correspondent during World War II.

Pyle was generally in the thick of the fighting, making landings with the troops in North Africa, Sicily, and Normandy. Pyle believed that the only way to honestly cover the fighting was to go where it was happening, rather than writing about it from the sidelines. Pyle spent 2 1/2 years writing about the common foot soldier, with whom he felt a special camaraderie.

In 1945, he wrote to one of his biggest fans, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower: "I've found that no matter how much we talk, or write, or show pictures, people who have not actually been in war are inca-

pable of having any real conception of it. I don't really blame the people. Some of them try hard to understand. But the world of an infantryman is a world so far removed from anything normal that it can be no more than academic to the average person."

Pyle's newspaper columns helped make Americans conscious of and sympathetic toward the infantryman. He constantly strived to make people feel what the ordinary soldier endured. It was a goal he never felt he fully achieved; however, many believed that he came closer than any other writer.

As the war in Europe drew to a close, Pyle turned to the war in the Pacific. The names of the islands where battles were fought seemed exotic and distant to most Americans, who had never heard of Saipan, Ie Shima, Guadalcanal, Tarawa, and Peleliu.

Pyle was determined to go with the Marines if he was going to write about them. The last big battle he covered was the invasion of Okinawa, code-named "Operation Iceberg." He was at the peak of his writing career, with his column appearing in approximately 400 daily publications and nearly 300 weeklies. In 1944, his columns for Scripps-Howard newspapers earned Pyle a Pulitzer Prize, and Hollywood made a movie titled "Ernie Pyle's Story of G.I. Joe."

As L-day (landing day) for Operation Iceberg approached, Pyle joined an assault transport ship carrying units of Maj. Gen. Pedro A. del Valle's 1st Marine Division and prepared for the worst. The Army and Marines had been briefed that the resistance on Okinawa would likely result in high casualties. Pyle wanted to see the war's end but confided to his friends that he didn't expect to survive.

The night before L-Day, Pyle was asked to write something to the men aboard the ship:

"In a message like this, it is the usual thing for a person to say that he's happy to be aboard. If I said that, I would be a liar for sure. Tomorrow, as you know, is our day. For some of you, this business tomorrow is new, and you are curious. For some of us, it is old stuff. None of us like it. But we have to do it, and wishing doesn't change it. In writing about tomorrow and the days that will follow, I'll try to give the folks back home an honest picture of what happens ... so that they can understand enough to give you the credit deserve. I'll

do the best I can. And so to you on the ship, and you in the boats, and you on the beaches—good luck. And I hope you wish me the same. I'll need it too."

Pyle went ashore with the seventh wave, the 5th Marine Division. Surprisingly, there was no resistance by the Japanese. The 5th Division got ashore with only two casualties: a case of heat exhaustion and complications from an injured foot.

After a week on Okinawa, Pyle returned to the command ship, Panamint, to write and recuperate from a bad cold. Maj. Gen. Andrew Davis Bruce, commanding the 77th Infantry Division, came aboard the Panamint with news that he had just received orders to seize the outlying island of Ie Shima.

The assault was scheduled for April 16, and Pyle decided to go out the following day. The day after the invasion of Ie Shima, Pyle joined Bruce's men. The following day, Pyle accompanied Lt. Col. Joseph B. Coolidge with several officers in a jeep in search of a new command post. As they drove along a well-traveled road, a concealed sniper fired on them with a .30 caliber Nambu machine gun.

They all bailed out of the vehicle as the sniper fired again. A single bullet struck Pyle in the left temple, killing him instantly. They buried Pyle about 100 yards from where the East China Sea washed onto the shore of Ie Shima. He was buried with his helmet on—the chaplain remarking that "a lot of the men thought he looked more natural that way."

Soldier and cartoonist Sgt. Bill Mauldin described the effect of Pyle's death:

"The only difference between Ernie's death and the death of any other good guy is that the other guy is mourned by his company. Ernie is mourned by the Army." The soldiers who Pyle had grown so close to put it best on a monument placed at the spot he was killed:

AT THIS SPOT  
THE 77TH INFANTRY DIVISION  
LOST A BUDDY  
ERNIE PYLE  
18 APRIL 1945

(The author visited the Ernie Pyle monument on Ie Shima when he was on active duty in the U.S. Navy.)

J.D. Haines, MD, MPH, FAAFP is a board-certified family practitioner.

## EPOCH TIMES INTERVIEWS SHEN YUN AUDIENCES

New York-based Shen Yun Performing Arts is the world's premier classical Chinese dance and music company, established in 2006. Aiming for an artistic revival and celebration of China's rich cultural heritage, the company performs classical Chinese dance, ethnic and folk dance, and story-based dance, accompanied by orchestral and solo performers.

### Shen Yun's Upcoming Performances

Montgomery	Ala.	Jan. 18
Greensboro	N.C.	Jan. 18
Colorado Springs	Colo.	Jan. 18-19
Portland	Ore.	Jan. 18-22
Denver	Colo.	Jan. 20-24
Oklahoma City	Oklia.	Jan. 21
Fairfax	Va.	Jan. 21-22

For additional performance dates, please visit <https://www.shenyun.com/tickets>

The Epoch Times is a proud sponsor of Shen Yun Performing Arts. We have covered audience reactions since Shen Yun's inception in 2006.



There's a lot of truth spoken in it, and truth mixed with beauty. There is a great message that really spoke to us in a lot of ways.

**ERIC HARRAH,**  
hardware design engineer



I see how [people] can be brought together. How diverse [different] cultures can be, but still, blend with ours.

**ERICA GARNES,**  
Emmy-winning newscast director



I saw another world when the curtain opened. Shen Yun is extraordinarily excellent! Overall, I feel I was in a dreaming world, which is magnificent.

**OODUKI SHIZI,**  
president of the Food Hygiene Association, in Nishinomiyu, Japan



IRYNA INSHYNA/SHUTTERSTOCK



A simple afternoon with a cozy blanket and a cup of tea or a quiet journaling session can be rejuvenating.

## Hibernating for the Winter

Use the season for rest and rejuvenation, then emerge in the spring refreshed and ready to hit the ground running

### BARBARA DANZA

Nature's patterns offer hints to us as to how we might live our lives. In spring, we find an opportune time to be planting, seeding, and bringing forth new ideas; in summer, the conditions are ripe for working and playing; in fall, we can be harvesting and nesting; and in winter, we might just want to hunker down and hibernate.

With sunshine minimal, temperatures low, and, perhaps, a pot of stew slowly bubbling—a cold, winter day is a time not to focus on feeling blue or withdrawn but to take time to rest, practice introspection, learn, and contemplate.

Here are a few ways to enjoy a season of hibernation:

#### Rest

The holidays tend to be a busy and stimulating time. Now that the glittery decor has been put away and the calendar is looking a bit more clear, take a cue from the sun and incorporate more rest into your schedule. Might you allow yourself more sleep at night or an afternoon nap? Even a simple afternoon with a cup of tea and a cozy blanket can be rejuvenating. Settle in for some winter's rest.

#### Read

If you've already got the tea and the blanket, all you need is a good book. Winter is a wonderful time to nurture your mind with quality literature or inspiring works of nonfiction. Make outings to the library or your local bookstore a staple activity this season and spend plenty of time simply reading.

#### Write

Wherever you read, keep a notebook and some lovely pens on hand for jotting down thoughts and ideas. Journaling regularly can have an inspiring effect on your life—allowing you to process your thoughts, recall good ideas, hone your focus, appreciate your blessings, and reach toward your personal goals. Additionally, you create in the process a keepsake that can be cherished and reviewed in the future. The winter season allows for time to think and ponder, and writing while you do enhances the experience for the better.

#### Nourish

Winter beckons us to nurture our minds, spirits, and bodies. Keep the pantry stocked with the makings of warm and hearty meals. Soups, stews, and roasts can be enjoyed in large batches and made from high-quality, fresh ingredients. Take time to put loving care into your food prep and keep you and your family well-nourished all winter long.

#### Catch the Sun

The sun disappears early each day at this time. Embracing the concept of hibernation doesn't mean you should actually hibernate like a bear in a cave. Be sure to adjust your schedule to get out into the fresh air before it departs each day. Perhaps you can take a stroll at lunchtime or a break during the day at a local park. Even parking far away from entrances as you run errands during the day can increase your time outside while the sun is up. When you can enjoy winter activities outside such as skiing or sledding, go for it.

#### Rejuvenate

The key to making the most of the winter season is to rejuvenate your whole self. Embrace hibernation. Slow down, take care, and emerge in the spring refreshed and ready to plant new seeds and bring forth a new you.

# How to Take the Plunge Into Non-Traditional Schooling

Advice from 13 successful education entrepreneurs

COURTESY OF SURF SKATE SCIENCE



Surf Skate Science is a homeschool co-op and educational program that offers hands-on learning through action sports in South Florida.

### KERRY MCDONALD

It's a great time to be an education entrepreneur! Parents are eager for access to diverse education options. They continue to explore alternatives to district schools, including homeschooling, microschooling, virtual schools, learning pods, low-cost private schools, and charter schools.

The Wall Street Journal reported recently that public schools lost more than a million students during the pandemic, and many aren't returning to a conventional classroom. Instead of competing with K-12 schooling alternatives and moving toward smaller, more personalized learning experiences for students, district schools are responding to declining enrollments by consolidating schools into much larger ones—a trend that's likely to prompt more parents to seek other learning options.

The widening gap between what parents want for their children's education and what mass schooling currently offers creates greater opportunities for today's education entrepreneurs.

If you're thinking about becoming an education entrepreneur in 2023, check out the advice below from several of the successful founders whom I featured on my LiberaTED Podcast in 2022. These suggestions came from our podcast conversations throughout the year. The entrepreneurs range from former public school teachers who launched microschools to venture capital-backed startup founders who've built national education networks.

Some of their advice is contradictory, such as when one founder says to jump in and get started while another one says to take it slow and steady, but all of it can be helpful on your journey to creating a new education option for families this year!

### 1 Molly Stephenson, co-founder of Wildflower Community School, a microschool for neurodiverse students in Wichita, Kansas

"One of the things that was hard for us I think when starting was asserting good boundaries for ourselves, because this job will burn you out really quickly. There's a lot of needs and—you saw the pace of our day—it doesn't stop. You get here and usually still have cold coffee on the desk at the end of the day and it's just very, very, very, very busy. So running a microschool, whether it has five kids in it or 35, is going to be like that and I think understanding that commitment from the beginning is important."

### 2 Ada Salie, founder of the Life Rediscovered microschool in Massachusetts:

"I would say that having a community of entrepreneurs is essential. I didn't really have that and I've been trying to create it. I have a small Facebook group of women who are running similar programs and we support each other just in terms of daily questions. I think that would have really helped me starting out and would have given me a little bit of a clearer path in terms of what needs to be done and what might be occupying most of my time."

ing designs. Mostly, he just delivered mail. His most notable contribution was demonstrating the perils of early commercial flying by crashing before he reached his destinations, then publishing extraordinary tales of survival.

A poor aristocrat born in 1900 to a provincial noble house, Saint-Exupéry struggled to find a purpose in the world and longed for adventure. His family saw the young man as a lazy good-for-nothing who refused to grow up and be responsible. Aviation was a way to evade the humdrum of adult life. "He had found a twentieth-century equivalent of the life of the troubadour, the crusader, the knight-errant," according to biographer Stacy Schiff in "Saint-Exupéry: A Biography." Saint-Exupéry was an absentminded pilot who inexplicably survived a full catalog of probable deaths. Most famously, he once set off to break a speed record, then hit a sand dune while looking at the clouds. After walking for four days in the Libyan desert, he and his companion happened upon a Bedouin with water and a camel.

In 1944, he vanished without a trace over the Mediterranean during an Allied reconnaissance mission. Speculation surrounding the details of his presumed death continues to this day.

### 'The Little Prince'

Saint-Exupéry wrote many successful books, none more so than the last one published in his lifetime. "The Little Prince" is, after the Bible, the world's most widely translated book.

### 3 Gayle Nagle, co-founder of the Sligo Sudbury School in Ireland

"Be aware as early on as you can of the challenges and the things that you need to know from a legal point of view. We had, quite early on, conversations with our planners, for example, regarding zoning, so we didn't waste a huge amount of time going down rabbit holes, looking for different premises and expecting to be able to have a facility in a domestic dwelling or different places like that."

"Just be really consistent and take it really seriously. We met every week, we approached it like a very serious business and we ran it as a business, taking minutes, recording our accounts very clearly, all of those things from the get-go."

### 4 Kelly Smith, founder of Prenda, a national network of learning pods and microschools

"Do it! I feel like I see too many people in planning mode for too long. And the real learning starts when you're living it, when you've got kids in there with you and you're figuring this out together. So I would say take that leap. The world needs you. The kids in your community need you. Please start your program. Start your microschool. This work is so rewarding."

### 5 Toni Frallicciardi, co-founder of Surf Skate Science, a homeschool program in South Florida

"So I think the first thing is to know why you want to do it. What are you most passionate about? If you're chasing after what you're most passionate about and what's true to your heart, it's going to do well regardless. And then just take baby steps. I think it was great that we started with just six students and now we have almost 250 students, which is crazy! So take those baby steps and when you get overwhelmed, have those people that you can go to and say, 'Hey, am I doing this right?'"



Students at Surf Skate Science not only learn about skating or surfing, but also about engineering, science, design, art, and math.

COURTESY OF SURF SKATE SCIENCE

### 6 Amar Kumar, founder of KaiPod Learning, a national network of personalized learning pods

"Start with the real problem that you care about, that parents and kids and educators need solved, and then see how you can solve it. Seek out those complaints, those pain points, those problems that you hear from friends and relatives and neighbors, and then go and build those solutions."

### 7 Cassidy Younghans, founder of Wild Roots, a grassroots self-directed learning community in Dallas

"Realize that you can start over. It broke my heart when the learning community that we had ended up needing to no longer be. But I got to start over. And I got to start over with so much more wisdom, so much more information, so much more support. The amount of money that we've raised equals the amount of money that was initially donated to fund the old learning community. So that's been really huge."

### 8 Emily Grégoire, founder of The Rainbow Room, a hybrid homeschooling program in Las Vegas

"I think it's like any sort of entrepreneurial project: You just have to get it started and it's going to be rough. The first go at it is not going to be perfect. Do you care about children? Do you care about families? Then start, keep going, little by little."

### 9 Donna Akers, founder of Ivy Greene Acton Academy in Mississippi

"Write down your goals, break it down step by step, and then step out and do it. It's not easy, but it is very doable. And most things that are worthwhile are not easy, so I just think go for it—open it in your home if you can't find a place."



Prenda connects students to tuition-free micro-schools. Headquartered in Arizona, it serves over 2,500 students in 12 states.

COURTESY OF PRENDA



My Tech High is a free platform that allows families to create a tailored educational approach for their students.

COURTESY OF MY TECH HIGH

## Antoine de Saint-Exupéry: Finding the Child Within

The book 'The Little Prince' mirrors its author's adventurous life, sense of wonder, and love of the stars

### ANDREW BENSON BROWN

My 3-year-old niece loves collecting trash. Whether it's a piece of shiny plastic, a discarded box, or a pinecone she found outside, she becomes very upset when you take her treasures away. In the mind of a child, a worthless item becomes the most cherished object on earth.

This attitude makes gift-giving easy. For Christmas, I gave her "Green Eggs and Ham." Since then, she has carried the book with her everywhere and insists that I read it to her multiple times a day. The invisible riches derived from this experience are in no way proportional to the \$5 cost of the gift. In times like these, the sense of perpetual wonder a child exudes is infectious.

In another classic children's book, "The Little Prince," the hero meets a railway switchman who describes the behavior of people on trains: They travel very fast, don't know

where they're going, and sleep along the way. "They are pursuing nothing at all," he says. "Only the children are flattening their noses against the windowpanes."

This book's author, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, possessed something of this childhood purity. He got along with the children of his acquaintances better than the acquaintances themselves, and his writings all express an outlook of curiosity and awe, a disposition toward beholding daily miracles.

**A Life of Adventure** Saint-Exupéry ranks with Charles Lindbergh and the Wright Brothers as one of the legendary pioneers of aviation. But his material role was

far smaller than other famous names in the field. Though he was an audacious pilot, he broke no flying records. Though a brilliant engineer, the 10 patents he registered were minor innovations rather than groundbreak-



French aviator Antoine de Saint-Exupéry was also the author of "The Little Prince," the second most translated book in the world.

The plot is simple. A pilot crashes into the Sahara desert, where he meets a boy nicknamed "the little prince." The Little Prince tells the pilot his story: how he lived on asteroid B-612, a tiny planet where his only friend is a single rose. He watered the rose every day and talked to it. After a quarrel with the rose, he traveled to nearby asteroids, where he met six different human adults. Then he came to earth, where he met a fox who taught him how to establish special relationships with other creatures by "taming" them. After this, the boy met the pilot. He then proceeds to help him find water in the desert, before vanishing.

The story's charm lies in the confrontations of innocence with experience. The asteroid-dwelling adults the Little Prince met were foolish people who governed their lives through absurd logic. A businessman, who had been counting for 50 years and recently surpassed 500 million, was asked what he is referring to.

"Little golden objects that set lazy men to idle dreaming," he told the Little Prince. In other words, stars. Why? So he can write their number down and "put them in the bank."

The wisest characters are non-human ones. The fox delivers the book's most famous line: "It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye."

Shortly before the Little Prince returns to his home world, he applies this wisdom to giving the pilot a "present." Asteroid B-612 is too small to see from earth, but when the

pilot looks up into the night sky, he will know that it is there. The stars are different things to different people, but the pilot will possess them as no one else does:

"In one of the stars I shall be living. In one of them I shall be laughing. And so it will be as if all the stars were laughing, when you look at the sky at night ... You—only you—will have stars that can laugh!"

And so the pilot will have a unique relationship with the stars. He will have tamed them, in a sense.

## The story's charm lies in the confrontations of innocence with experience.

### The Extraterrestrial From France

"The Little Prince," like everything Saint-Exupéry wrote, bears striking parallels with a brief but crucial period of his life. From 1927 to 1928, Saint-Exupéry lived in a wooden shack bordering the Sahara on one side and the Atlantic on the other. He had been appointed as the chief of Cape Juby, an airfield in Morocco that operated as a stop in a French mail line. His job was to act as an ambassador to Moorish nomads, who regularly shot down planes for booty

and held pilots for ransom. During his 13 months there, he flew rescue missions to retrieve downed pilots and negotiated the release of captured ones—14 in all.

He returned to France a national hero. As the years passed, the crashes multiplied with the survival stories, and Saint-Exupéry the man became "Saint-Ex," a figure of legend.



In "The Little Prince," the main character is a little boy from another planet, who has a unique relationship with the stars.

### 13 Matt Bowman, founder of My Tech High, a national platform enabling families to curate a personalized educational approach

"My advice would be what I'd say to any entrepreneur: just start. Many want to spend a year or two or three designing, developing, and then launching. I really see the value in launching with some kind of minimum viable product and then adapt, and iterate, and pivot from there instead of trying to think that you can build a perfect education company in the closet and then launch two years later. Just get out in the market, try to do something.

"I tell students that I work with the first dollar is the hardest. So go get that first dollar instead of waiting to build it so you think it's perfect. Go get a dollar first and then adapt and iterate from there. And then I'd also say get to your 10th failure fast. That's a principle I was taught early on.

"My Tech High is definitely not my first company. I'm grateful that it's successful, but I had at least 10, maybe 20, failed pursuits that really taught me things that I needed to know before My Tech High could succeed. So if you haven't had your 10 failures, keep pushing to get your 10th failure and then the next one might just succeed."

## Parents are eager for access to diverse education options.

This article was originally published on FEE.org.

Kerry McDonald is a senior education fellow at FEE and host of the weekly *LiberaTED* podcast. She is also the author of "Unschooling: Raising Curious, Well-Educated Children Outside the Conventional Classroom" (2019) and an adjunct scholar at the Cato Institute. She lives in Cambridge, Mass., with her husband and four children.

Like the Little Prince who journeyed through the stars, Saint-Exupéry visited tents of nomads beyond Cape Juby and flew mail to Casablanca. Where the Little Prince watered his rose every morning, the lonely pilot dried his planes to prevent damage from humidity. He even tried taming a desert fox. To complete his rescue missions effectively, he often circumvented rule-bound bureaucrats of the sort the Little Prince meets on neighboring asteroids. And of course, he felt a unique bond with the sky and loved to share the invisible treasures of storytelling.

Most extraordinarily of all, Saint-Exupéry's sudden disappearance a year after the book was published resembled the Little Prince's. The Little Prince witnesses 44 sunsets before traveling to earth. Saint-Exupéry lived to be 44.

"You are an extraterrestrial," a friend once told Saint-Exupéry near the end of his life, when he was living in America. The friend was probably referring to the Frenchman's mismatched wardrobe and the fact that he only spoke a foreign language.

"Yes, yes it's true," he replied. "I sometimes go for walks among the stars."

Andrew Benson Brown is a Missouri-based poet, journalist, and writing coach. He is an editor at *Bard Owl Publishing and Communications* and the author of "Legends of Liberty," an epic poem about the American Revolution. For more information, visit [Apollogist.wordpress.com](http://Apollogist.wordpress.com)



**DEAR NEXT GENERATION** Advice from our readers to our young people

# You Can Do Anything You Put Your Mind To

When the going gets tough, the tough get going

I want to offer to young people that they can do anything they put their minds to do; happiness and success are very personal and individual.

When I was 11, we moved from the city in California to rural Idaho. So when I wanted to go to a friend's, I would complain to my dad. He would say, "You'll figure it out." So I either biked two miles each way or in winter I ran. This was not easy and at times, it did not seem safe, but later, I would do the same to get to school if I didn't want to take the bus and its inconvenient schedule.

When I got into my first apartment, I lived four miles from college and two from work. Owning a car was out of the question, so I ran or biked. In six months, I moved closer and paid the higher rent. It took my first year to save for a car; I was 18. I bought my dream car, a 1966 red Ford Mustang. I also realized it was going to take a little longer to graduate since I worked two jobs.

When it occurred to me that life would be happier if I owned a home, I had no idea that a single lady could qualify so I did the legwork necessary to buy one at auction, in a desirable area. Again, I had to work two jobs to pull this off. My peers at work seemed to have an easier time in life; they had time to socialize but I noticed a lot of them lived at home still. I got married to a nice, conservative man. After I paid that home off, he was hesitant when I told him I wanted to pay cash for rentals. I had no idea how to do this, but I inherently realized I would figure it out so he supported my dream. J.R. Simplot was my hero. I remem-

ber him saying, "My advice to young people is to grab a piece of the action." I still considered myself young (34) so I took that leap.

Several years passed. I realized I wanted to try my hand at the stock market and offering real estate notes. Then, we're in a deep recession in 2006. Things flatlined for a very long time, but I kept investing and working two jobs.

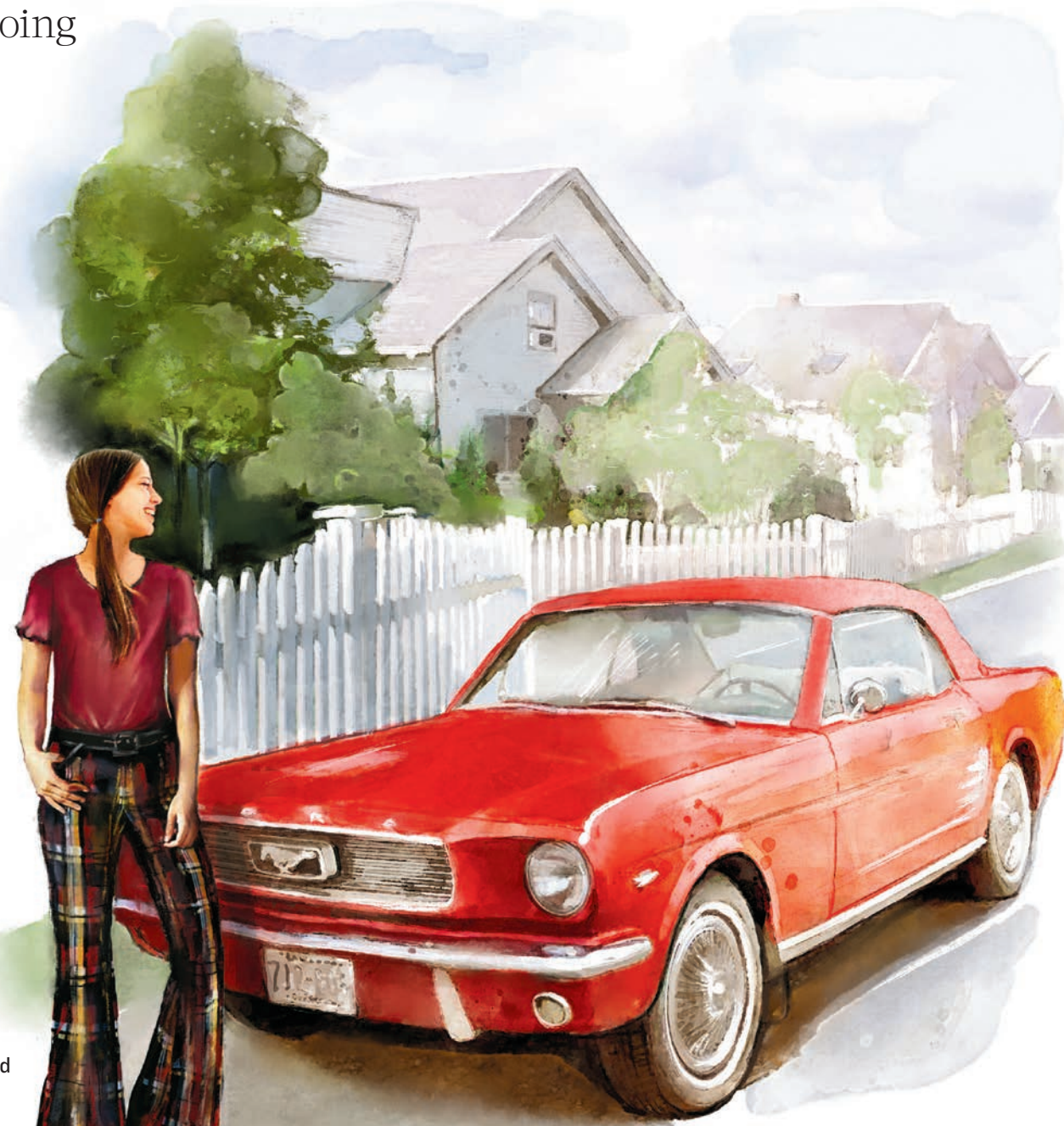
As I planned my next great thing, I would meet up with the investment advisor at work for my annual meeting. One day he said, "You know, I travel throughout the state and help people with their retirements. No one is getting the rate of return that you are (16 percent). Do you mind if I ask you how you are doing that?" Can you imagine him (a background in finance) asking me (a civil servant) that question? I didn't walk out of that meeting. I levitated. One year later, at age 54, I retired and on to my next great thing.

—Constantina "CK" Kortopattis, Boise, Idaho

## What advice would you like to give to the younger generations?

We call on all of our readers to share the timeless values that define right and wrong and pass the torch, if you will, through your wisdom and hard-earned experience. We feel that the passing down of this wisdom has diminished over time and that only with a strong moral foundation can future generations thrive.

Send your advice, along with your full name, state, and contact information to NextGeneration@epochtimes.com or mail it to: *Next Generation, The Epoch Times*, 229 W. 28th St., Floor 7, New York, NY 10001.



Constantina "CK" Kortopattis spent a year saving for her dream car, a 1966 red Ford Mustang.

BIBA KAYEWICH

## EDUCATION

# Read-Aloud: From Crib to College

Addressing the crisis of illiteracy starts with the basics

## JEFF MINICK

In an interview with Winsome Sears, now Virginia's lieutenant governor, Armstrong Williams asked Sears to name one major problem in Virginia. Sears responded that 85 percent of black eighth graders in the state are functionally illiterate. The astonished Williams had his fact-checkers look up that statistic while Sears continued speaking, and they found that 85 percent of black eighth graders across the country lack proficiency in reading. In some states, that figure climbs to 90 percent.

Meanwhile, the Nation's Report Card for 2022 shows that 30 percent of all eighth graders are reading below the basic level of literacy. Of Americans between the ages of 16 and 74, 54 percent of them read at a level below that of sixth grade.

Illiteracy destroys lives and opportunities. On a broader scale, it will eventually destroy our republic just as surely as will debt, war, or political divisions.

We can point to many causes for this catastrophe in learning: poverty, failing schools, the COVID lockdowns, screens and social media, and negligent parents. With the exception of Sears and a few others, however, we rarely find this disaster front and center with any of our politicians, bureaucrats, news media, or educators.

## So What Can We Do?

We begin with the basics: a book, a baby, and a mother's lap.

Even before learning to crawl, a child can appreciate books. Mother Goose nursery rhymes introduce the rhythm of words and language. Books with bright, bold colors attract the eye. Many babies enjoy gnawing on board books, seeking relief from teething or exploring the world through the sense of taste. Treasure that incisor-marked copy of "Where's Spot?" for those who may be the first signs of a budding bibliophile.

As infants grow older, the stories and poems grow more sophisticated. "The Itsy-Bitsy Spider" gives way to "Mary Had a Little Lamb," which in turn bows out to "The Pirate Don Durk of Dowdee." Reading "The Three Little Pigs" transitions into "The Cat in the Hat" and then on to chapter books such as "Stuart Little."

And whether you're a grandmother wise in

the ways of children or the clueless father of a 2-year-old, vast resources are at your command. Books such as Gladys Hunt's "Honey for a Child's Heart," Jim Trelease's "The Read-Aloud Handbook," Mem Fox's "Reading Magic," editor Rachel Williams's "Read to Your Baby Every Day"—these and a score of other titles on this topic, most of them with additional help and book lists, pop up on the catalog of my medium-size public library.

Once you've selected some books and begun your read-alouds, it's time to bring some skills into play.

## Main Tips

**Voice.** This one is key to all the others. No matter how many times you've read "Goodnight Moon" to your 3-year-old, throw yourself into the moment. If a Broadway actor can repeat the same performance a thousand times and still excite the audience, so can you. Never read in a deadpan voice. Never read too fast. Pace yourself and pause to add emphasis or to create tension. For those of you, male or female, who are shy, now is the time to let that inner performer out of the cage. You'll never find a better audience.

**Drama.** Use that voice to enhance the drama in a story. When you're reading "The



Reading aloud to children fills them with an appreciation for books and prepares them to learn how to read.

Three Billy Goats Gruff" and the troll asks, "Who's that trip-trapping over my bridge?" become the troll by assuming a snarly, nasty tone. When the Big Billy Goat Gruff identifies himself, switch gears and use your deep voice: "IT IS I, THE BIG BILLY GOAT GRUFF." Once again, give that actor a place on the stage.

## Illiteracy destroys lives and opportunities.

**Talk.** Kids young and old often have questions about the stories you read to them. Why is the stepmother in "Hansel and Gretel" so cruel? Is it right for the boy in "Jack and the Beanstalk" to steal from the giant? What does the Skin Horse in "The Velveteen Rabbit" really mean when he tells the Rabbit "By the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby?" Enter into these discussions. They lead to insight and laughter.

**Time.** Children love routine. Many parents put their kids to bed at night by reading them a story. Set aside time during the day for sharing a book and a sofa with them.

## More Pointers

**Books.** Keep plenty of books on-hand, either ones you purchase or from the library. Keep them on the lower shelves of a case so that the little ones can reach them. Sometimes, when you sit down to read, allow them to select the books.

**Treats.** Serve up a treat with story-time: a cookie and a glass of milk, apple slices, or crackers and cheese. Kids will associate these pleasures with reading.

**Older siblings.** Have brothers and sisters read to the younger ones. This gives them practice in their own reading while they set an example: "If big sister can read, so can I."

**The Great Stories.** Several of the resources mentioned here contain scores of recommended books, many of them arranged by age or grade level. Be sure to expose your children to these treasures. Books like "Little Red Riding Hood," "The Wind in the Willows," "Winnie the Pooh" and "The Chronicles of Narnia" are the water-

ing cans of joy and wisdom.

**Family.** As the kids grow older, we tend to abandon these special times together. Consider reading books as a family. Even 10 minutes a day around the supper table will deepen bonds between parents and children.

## Good News All Around

In "Reading Magic," Fox brings up the bonding that takes place during these shared story times. She writes, "Read-aloud sessions are times when parents and children fall in love with each other." She also notes that even for babies, this "bonding through books helps the brain to develop. It's hard to read to a baby without holding it, and touch is known to be the most important of the five senses for setting down the neural pathways in learning, especially in the first four months of life."

Reading aloud also benefits the reader as well as the listener. It provides the pleasure of enjoying our children, demands a break from our duties, and if entered into with the right spirit, can remove us, however temporarily, from our worries.

So there you have it. Sharing books with our children is good for them, good for us, and even good for our country.

Who would have ever guessed that Mother Goose and Doctor Seuss possessed such superpowers?

## Additional Resources

The guides mentioned above are ones I've used myself and encouraged my children to use as well. For those who might need more convincing about the benefits of reading aloud, I highly recommend Meghan Cox Gurdon's "The Enchanted Hour: The Miraculous Power of Reading Aloud in the Age of Distraction." William Russell's "Classics to Read Aloud to Your Children" has no pictures, but offers wonderful excerpts from such books as "Tom Sawyer" and "Don Quixote."

Search online for 100 Best Baby Books for Your Nursery, and you'll find an array of childhood classics with mini-reviews of each book. Search some more, and you'll easily find site after site recommending books for kids of all ages.

Jeff Minick lives and writes in Front Royal, Virginia. He is the author of two novels, "Amanda Bell" and "Dust on Their Wings," and two works of nonfiction, "Learning as I Go" and "Movies Make the Man."

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK



Villa Borghese is also known as the Villa Pinciana, and is the third largest public park in Rome at 198 acres. Unlike other Renaissance villas, the park is the main attraction and the buildings support the beauty of the garden landscape.

LARGER THAN LIFE: ART THAT INSPIRES US THROUGH THE AGES

# Villa Borghese

## An Idyllic Museum Park

## ARIANE TRIEBSWETTER

In the heart of a bustling city, one can often long for a moment of peace. The large public park in central Rome, known as the Villa Borghese, or museum park, is such a perfect sanctuary. Combining Italian art and nature, this open-air museum is the perfect place to replenish one's soul.

Located north of the steep slopes of the Spanish Steps, the Villa Borghese features gardens, museums, and diverse attractions, including an artificial island with a temple. Original fountains, sculptures, and Neoclassical and 19th-century buildings combine to form a picturesque space in which one can admire the best of Italian art.

Before it became one of the most attractive parks in Europe, the villa belonged to the Borghese family. In 1605, Cardinal Scipione Borghese transformed a vineyard into the most extensive gardens built in the city since Roman times. The villa was meant to showcase the prestige of his family and house the cardinal's impressive Roman, Renaissance, and



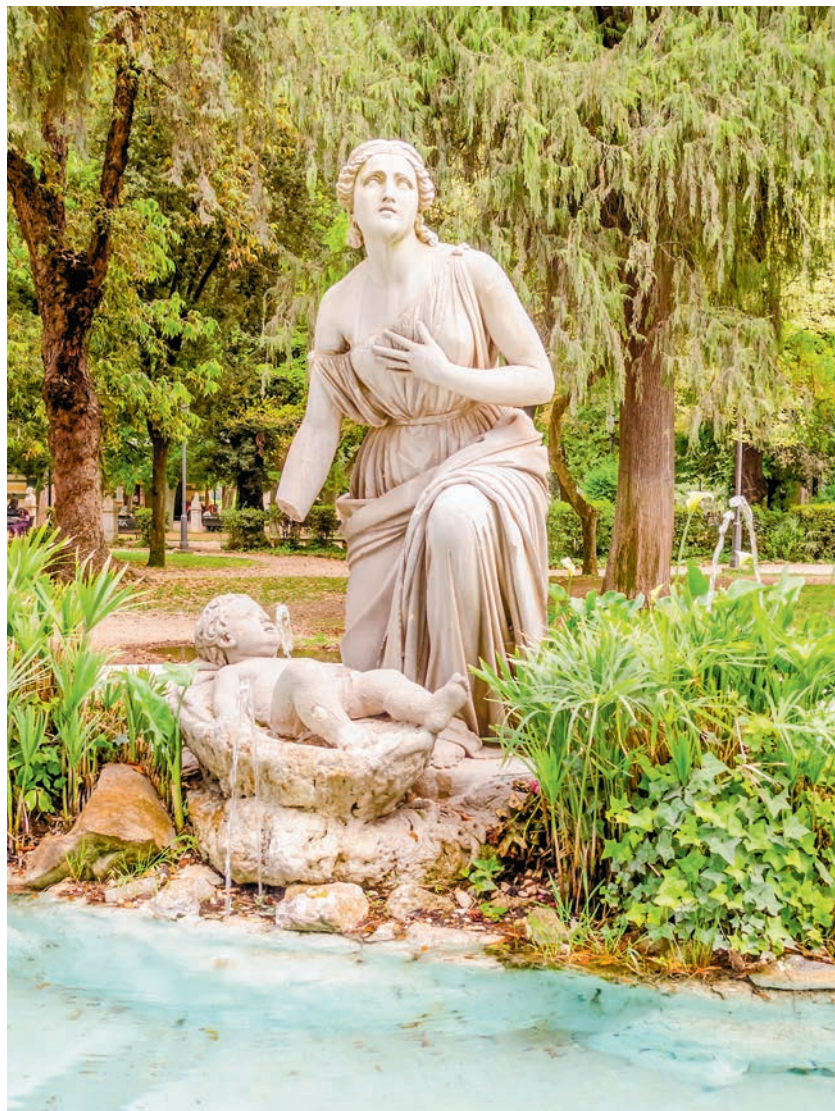
Surprisingly, the garden hosts a replica of Shakespeare's open-air Elizabethan theater, The Globe. This aerial view shows the structure as an example of Renaissance architecture. The theater offers productions from June through October.

Baroque art collection.

Scipione's art collection is on display in the Galleria Borghese, located in the park. Architects Flaminio Ponzio and Giovanni Vasanzio designed the art gallery in a Renaissance style with a return to classical structures. This is noticeable in the building's facade, adorned with antique sculptures in the Mannerist style, an extension of the Renaissance style. The interior is as magnificent as the exterior, covered in Roman marble and filled with art, including several masterpieces by Baroque sculptor Gian Lorenzo Bernini.

Other architectural highlights include the Casina di Raffaello and the Casina Valadier, Neoclassical buildings adorned with Pompeian-style frescos. As such, the Villa Borghese combines the three classical arts (architecture, painting, and sculpture) with nature, giving it an idyllic character.

Ariane Triebswetter is an international freelance journalist, with a background in modern literature and classical music.



Based on classical models, the temple of Diana was built by Antonio Asprucci in 1789. This small circular temple is in the Neoclassical style, a style characterized by its use of simple geometric forms, inspired by the classical style. A series of steps around the structure leads to the interior.



Set on an idyllic lake on an artificial island, the temple of Asclepius (the Greek god of medicine) showcases the classical architecture with its columns and pediment. Built in 1786 by Antonio Asprucci and his son Mario Asprucci, the temple is thought to be in memory of the ancient temple of Asclepius on Tiber Island. At the time, reproductions of ancient temples were a common decorative landscape feature.



Fountains grace many areas of the park with classical decorations and carvings in stucco. Mythological gods and sea creatures adorn the water features. As seen here at the center of four tree-lined avenues is the seahorse fountain. With bodies shaped like fish, the seahorses hold the fountain on their heads.



The entrance facade of the Galleria Borghese, located on the Pincian Hill, shines in white stucco. A U-shaped structure with side wings, a central portico topped with a terrace, and topped with antique sculptures, the Galleria is known for its outstanding collection of Italian Baroque paintings and Renaissance sculptures, highlighted by sculptures by Gian Lorenzo Bernini.

This Victorian clock exemplifies the originality of Villa Borghese. Located not far from the temple of Asclepius, this fascinating Victorian "hydrochronometer" (water clock) was built in 1867 by Giovanni Battista Embricco for the 1867 Paris Universal Exposition. In 1873, the clock was placed in the Villa Borghese into a fountain designed by architect Gioacchino Ersoch.

Another beautiful fountain set in a shaded square shows a woman and Moses in the bulrushes, where he was found and saved.



HANNES ECHINGER/EYEEM/GETTY IMAGES

HOMESCHOOL

# Teaching Language Arts: An Unhurried Approach



"Tell Me a Story" and "Tell Me a Story Again" by Jan McGrath. COURTESY OF JAN MCGRATH



Jan McGrath, creator of 'Tell Me a Story,' offers her insights into homeschooling and teaching reading, writing, and foreign languages

BARBARA DANZA

Jan McGrath is a homeschooling mom and creator of "Tell Me a Story," a writing program for home educators. I recently asked her about her experience homeschooling and for advice for parents when it comes to teaching reading, writing, and foreign language. Here's what she said.

**The Epoch Times:** What led you to homeschool your children?

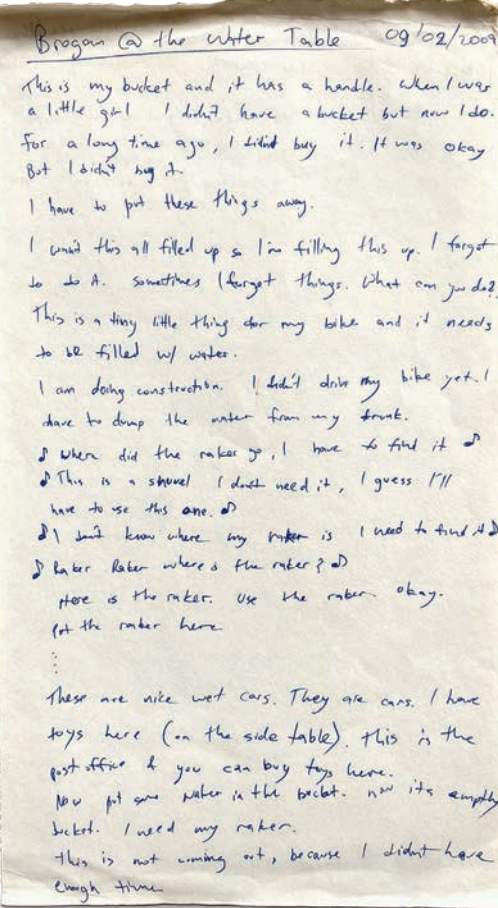
**Jan McGrath:** I knew homeschooling families that had been home educating their children for years. They allowed me to visit their homes and shared why they chose homeschooling.

What I noticed was that several of the homeschooling families had a lifestyle mixed with work (chores or part-time jobs), service (community projects), and learning (academics). This resonated with me, and I wanted this same flexibility and choice that homeschooling affords you.

I also read books that encouraged me toward homeschooling. The books I read were "A Charlotte Mason Companion," by Karen Andreola and "Better Late Than Early," by Raymond Moore.

A child, to Charlotte Mason, was a born person, not an empty vessel. This meant that a child could be presented with living ideas and meet mind-to-mind with

COURTESY OF JAN MCGRATH



An example of a transcription of a child's story.

authors, art, music, and other ideas from books directly. A child doesn't need the parent to chew up their food, they can do it for themselves. We, the home educator, can simply provide our children a feast of ideas originating from living books centered on poetry, history, nature studies, music appreciation, handicrafts, cooking, gardening, and more. The child can develop their own connections and for advice for parents when it comes to teaching reading, writing, and foreign language. Here's what she said.

**The Epoch Times:** What do you believe are the greatest benefits of homeschooling?

**Ms. McGrath:** The greatest benefit is an unhurried lifestyle. We habitually have all of our meals together, as well as cook together. Mealtimes are the best times for us because we can discuss what we have learned and discovered, and delight in the wonder of whatever we discovered or learned on a particular day. This type of discussion is informal and spontaneous. This is the life of a scholar: an individual who has the leisure to learn. And homeschooling allows us the time to learn with and alongside our children.

**The Epoch Times:** What do you find to be the greatest challenges as a homeschooling parent?

**Ms. McGrath:** The challenges I have had were concerns about my children being academically behind or that their home education may have some academic holes. However, with a Charlotte Mason education, I felt at ease. In my opinion, I believed this was a rich education because of the varied books, arts, music, poetry, history, nature studies, and so forth that were presented to my children.

I also realized there will be academic holes and that is OK. The goal for our family was to teach our children to love learning and thus become independent lifelong learners. What my children didn't learn, they can discover and acquire for themselves because of the home learning lifestyle we have nurtured.

The home learning life centers on building a home library, providing a garage full of construction tools, shelves of art supplies and craft materials, all of which is within arm's reach for our children. My children were often in the garage creating something, so we ended up document-

ing the pieces that they created through photo journaling. Once I had a collection of their creations on one page in a photo collage, I began to realize that my children were learning.

**The Epoch Times:** What about foreign languages? When do you recommend parents begin teaching children a foreign language and how do you recommend they do so?

**Ms. McGrath:** Like learning our mother tongue, you speak the target language as early as possible. Even if you don't know the language perfectly or fluently, homeschooling allows you to immerse your children in the language that you want them to learn.

## Home education is very individualized and tailor-made for your students; no two families are alike.

**The Epoch Times:** Reading and writing are fundamental elements of a good education. What advice would you offer new homeschooling parents concerned with their ability to teach reading and writing?

**Ms. McGrath:** The advice I would offer is to read to your students before you teach them to read. Sit on the sofa and read books authored, for example, by A.A. Milne, Robert McCloskey, E.B. White, and Laura Ingalls Wilder. You can't read too much. Teach your children to read by reading to them. A home culture of reading models the value of reading to your children.

Then writing will come because you have trained your children's ears to hear the words of the great authors that have created timeless, living books. A child can't write well if they haven't read much.

For my children, I used a reading curriculum called "Sing, Spell, Read and Write" by Sue Dickson. She had this wonderful CD that came with the readers and my boys learned their phonics largely from listening to its catchy songs. I waited until I knew my children were ready and didn't start teaching reading until then. Waiting until your children's brains are ready is the key. It is far easier to teach your kids to read and write when you wait on their brain development. If you teach them reading and writing too early, you and your child will be frustrated, and homeschooling will not be a joyful experience.

As far as writing, I used to worry quite a bit about this. However, it wasn't until I learned about journaling that I became less anxious. This is the reason I advocate

journaling preceded by and combined with reading living books.

**The Epoch Times:** You deemed writing so important that you created the journal writing program, "Tell Me A Story." What inspired you to develop this offering for homeschooling parents?

**Ms. McGrath:** My oldest child was often talking in spurts when he was about 2 years old. I would either record him or simply talk with him, asking him to "tell me a story." When he was 3 years old and speaking in more phrases and sentences, I started to write down his words and, in that moment, my son was in awe. He noticed his thoughts, his own words, were now documented in his own journal, in a little booklet. This was a very special moment for him, and I continued to have him dictate his thoughts, resulting in "Tell Me A Story Again," my second booklet. I would transcribe them until he was able to hold a pencil comfortably.

The delight on my son's face inspired me to create the journal booklets. The journal entries are meaningful for my children because they "tell me" what they understand about a current event, a historical event, or how they are feeling about a piece of art. To this day, my children will make journal entries. We also continue to read together, and my children will also read independently.

**The Epoch Times:** What about foreign languages? When do you recommend parents begin teaching children a foreign language and how do you recommend they do so?

**Ms. McGrath:** Like learning our mother tongue, you speak the target language as early as possible. Even if you don't know the language perfectly or fluently, homeschooling allows you to immerse your children in the language that you want them to learn.

So for example, I don't know how to speak Mandarin Chinese fluently. I had actually learned to speak the language with my children by first reading picture books to them—books that were written in English as well in Chinese (in pinyin). The Eric Carle books were excellent for this because I found the narrative ("Brown Bear, Brown Bear" or "The Very Hungry Caterpillar") repeated verbs and had simple sentences that my children could follow along without any translation. In fact, this method of learning a foreign language coincided with François Gouin's method of learning a foreign language, a method that Charlotte Mason implemented.

It was from those early years of teaching my children Mandarin Chinese, that I opted to continue this François Gouin-Charlotte Mason approach toward foreign language learning. This method specifically focuses on simple sentences spoken in English and then in the target language. No translation is involved. The repetitive and short language lesson inspires the student to spontaneously create their own simple sentences in the target language. This is how we learn our mother tongue—without translation and through speaking typically in short, simple sentences. This is why I created MeiMeiMandarin.weebly.com. I could not find anything available that specifically taught Mandarin Chinese using the François Gouin-Charlotte Mason approach.

**The Epoch Times:** What do you wish you had known before you began homeschooling?

**Ms. McGrath:** Finding a home education philosophy is very important, and until you have one that you are comfortable with and are willing to follow, then I feel you will be adrift picking up the latest homeschooling curriculum from one year to the next. That is what happened to me until I anchored myself with a homeschooling philosophy.

I think this is the most important step and the earliest decision a homeschooling family will need to make before embarking on homeschooling. There are many homeschooling philosophies such as traditional homeschooling, classical homeschooling, unschooling, and Charlotte Mason. There is no right or wrong philosophy, only what is right for your family.

Home education is very individualized and tailor-made for your students; no two families are alike. Try out one home education approach for a month and then try another, allowing your family time to figure out which works best for you. I think it's well worth investing the time to decide which particular home education approach is best.

For more information on Tell Me a Story Again, see [TellMeAStoryagain.weebly.com](http://TellMeAStoryagain.weebly.com)

For more information on the Mei Mei Mandarin Series, see [MeiMeiMandarin.weebly.com](http://MeiMeiMandarin.weebly.com)



# FOR KIDS ONLY

THE EPOCH TIMES

Week 3, 2023

## Nobody Knows

By Walter de la Mare

Often I've heard the Wind sigh  
By the ivied orchard wall,  
Over the leaves in the dark night,  
Breathe a sighing call,  
And faint away in the silence,  
While I, in my bed,  
Wondered, 'twixt dreaming and waking,  
What it said.

Nobody knows what the Wind is,  
Under the height of the sky,  
Where the hosts of the stars keep far away house  
And its wave sweeps by—  
Just a great wave of the air,  
Tossing the leaves in its sea,  
And foaming under the eaves of the roof  
That covers me.

And so we live under deep water,  
All of us, beasts and men,  
And our bodies are buried down under the sand,  
When we go again;  
And leave, like the fishes, our shells,  
And float on the Wind and away,  
To where, o'er the marvellous tides of the air,  
Burns day.

## WHAT DID THE ARTIST DRAW BEFORE BED?

**You can't use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have.**

MAYA ANGELOU (1928-2014), AMERICAN POET

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

ALL IMAGES BY SHUTTERSTOCK

By Aidan Danza

# COMMON GEMSTONES

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

**Jewels are meant to be rare;**

their rarity makes them more valuable. Some are more common than others. Here are the most common.

### QUARTZ

Pure quartz is a clear-ish white stone that is one of the most common gemstones in the world. Quartz is very widespread and inexpensive, and it's often used in jewelry. It's also used in quartz clock movements. The tiny bit of quartz vibrates when pulsed with electricity, and this vibration triggers hand movement.

To find your own quartz is a little more difficult than simply buying it, but must be more satisfying. The best way to find it is to look in old mine tailings. This isn't the actual mine, but the dirt that the miners have excavated, purely above the ground. Quartz often forms veins in rock beds, which can be found on rocky outcroppings in mountainous areas, or deep underground in bedrock.

### AMETHYST

Believe it or not, a stone as highly regarded as amethyst is actually just a type of quartz, with the distinctive purple color formed from trace amounts of radiation and trace amounts of iron ions. Amethysts are interesting in that they occur in few places, but in those few places, they seem to be present in very large amounts.

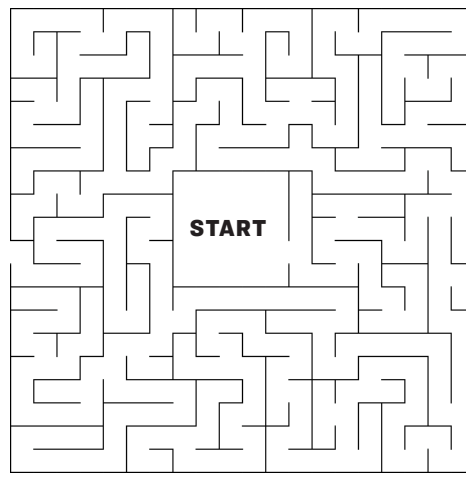
Throughout history, the only place you could find them was in Siberia, but more recently, enormous deposits have been discovered in Brazil, Uruguay, and Africa. The crystals are very inexpensive to buy, but difficult to find on your own.

### OPAL

Opal is a very unique gemstone because it's multicolored, and these colors change with the angle of light. This phenomenon is called play-of-colors, and it's unique to opals, specifically, precious opals. There is another variety called common opal that doesn't show play-of-colors, but is much easier to find. They're somewhat difficult to find and are typically mined in states such as Nevada, Oregon, or Idaho.



## AMAZING ESCAPES!



**USE THE FOUR NUMBERS IN THE CORNERS, AND THE OPERANDS (+, -, AND X)** to build an equation to get the solution in the middle. There may be more than one "unique" solution but, there may also be "equivalent" solutions. For example:  $6 + (7 \times 3) + 1 = 28$  and  $1 + (7 \times 3) + 6 = 28$

Easy puzzle 1

6	7		
49			
5	6		
+	-	x	÷

Solution For Easy 1

$2 = (6 - 5) + 9$

Medium puzzle 1

17	20		
10			
3	19		
+	-	x	÷

Solution for Medium 1

$8 = (21 - 02) - 61$

Hard puzzle 1

25	31		
84			
19	30		
+	-	x	÷

Solution for Hard 1

$06 - 61 \times (52 - 18)$



**HIDDEN TREASURES** by Liz Ball  
[www.HiddenPicturePuzzles.com](http://www.HiddenPicturePuzzles.com)

**WORD SEARCH:** Getting Creative!

T	X	W	U	N	I	Q	U	E	X	C	R	A	F	T
E	X	P	R	E	S	S	I	V	E	S	T	O	R	
I	M	A	G	I	N	A	T	I	V	E	W	L	T	
C	I	N	G	E	N	U	I	T	Y	V	E	A	N	H
H	W	B	N	E	Y	D	D	Y	E	N	U	E	H	
A	Y	O	G	E	F	N	M	I	B	S	V	S	I	
N	V	A	H	J	E	A	L	K	U	N	E	A	N	F
T	M	R	N	T	E	E	B	N	I	R	C	N	X	F
I	M	C	E	R	I	U	L	F	G	M	I	N	E	
N	U	R	D	E	K	S	Z	I	E	R	R	W	L	R
G	P	H	K	B	D	E	P	A	F	A	I	A	E	
R	F	A	N	T	A	S	Y	N	V	P	T	X	N	
P	M	A	R	T	I	S	T	I	C	H	I	N	T	
W	H	I	S	T	C	A	L	K	I	N	O	C	N	
A	B	S	T	R	A	C	T	B	G	C	G	N	U	Y

- Abstract
- Animation
- Artistic
- Craft
- Different
- Dreamy
- Enchanting
- Expressive
- Table
- Fantasy
- Fresh
- Graphic
- Image
- Imaginative

- Ingenuity
- Invent
- Make-believe
- New
- Pretend
- Story
- Tale
- Unique
- Unusual
- Whimsical
- Writing





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