

Building a Portfolio for Assessments and Personal Use

Definition of a Portfolio:

A portfolio is simply a record of a student's work highlighting educational progress over a period of time.

A portfolio will illustrate what a child has learned, how it was accomplished, what resources were used, how much progress was made.

Goal and objective: show progress and improvement

Honest representation of student's work, events, skills and activities that shows progress and change using a small selection of samples from the year.

Not exhaustive or all-inclusive—Not everything they did that year. Not a showcase of perfection.

Establish your purpose and audience:

1. Assessments?
2. Potential employers/college admin?
3. Family documentation?
4. As an heirloom?
5. Friends and family?
6. Year-end review for your child?

Pick a method:

1. Binder method

- Put the skeleton of the portfolio together when you plan your year and do your notification paperwork.
 - Set up a binder with tabs for each subject you plan to cover for the year.
 - Add a cover page with photo, name and date.
 - Put scope and sequence/table of contents in each section with planned reading list.
 - Include planner or calendar, a place to record work accomplished, field trips, sports schedules, co-op classes, etc.
- This becomes their school binder for the year where they keep and organize their schedule and work.
- Will probably need to remove extra items for the final portfolio.

2. Laundry basket method (file folder in file cabinet, expanding file folder, drawer, shelf, shoe box)

- This is your “working portfolio” until the end of the year
- Gather items throughout the year and make a stash in your designated place.
- Sort, select and organize your samples at the end of the year.
- Have your child assist with the sort and selection and use the time as a review session with your child.

3. Blog (public or private)

- Order students can keep a blog themselves.

4. Scrapbook

- More visual, heavy on the photos. Becomes a piece of art.

5. Yearbook

- Websites like shutterfly will bind and have templates you can use
- Again, very visual with lots of photos

Decide:

How much? (to include?)

- Major subjects (math, English): one sample a week? One a month? Every 5th worksheet?
- Minor subjects (music, art): one sample per month? Per quarter?

How often? (will you add to or work on your portfolio?)

“Once a quarter, I set aside a portfolio day in our lesson plan – yes, I count that as a day of school! The boys and I go through their work and choose items to put in their portfolios. These days are a good reminder to them of how far they have come in difficult subjects.”

At the end of the school year?

How many? (portfolios for the entire school career?)

- One for each year?
- 4 portfolios? (Pre-K - Grade 2, grade 3 to grade 5, grade 6 and 7, grade 8 through graduation)
- 3? (elementary, middle and high?)
- 2? (elementary and highschool level work?)

THE “RIGHT WAY” IS THE WAY YOU WILL MAINTAIN AND FOLLOW THROUGH WITH.

Give your older students the responsibility of making their own portfolio:

Self evaluate, gain confidence, see trends and growth in interest areas, create a large body of work, learn to use the reflection process, learn to use the selection process, create documentation of knowledge and skills, develop marketable skills. See [8 Benefits of Creating Homeschool Portfolios](#)

What you COULD include in your portfolio (you will NOT have all of these items in a portfolio!):

- Student page: photo of the student, name, year
- Notification paperwork (intended curriculum for the year)
- Table of contents
- Sample weekly schedule
- Goals and objectives
- Calendar/planner
- Booklist
- Free-reading book list (save library receipts to make lists at end of year)
- Log of educational activities (baking, home repair, car maintenance, meal planning & prep, etc.)
- Log of handicrafts (crochet, sewing, card making, knotting, woodworking, etc.)
- Hunting log, camping log
- List of curriculum
- Drawings, artwork
- Sample narrations
- Writing: dated samples of creative writing, essays, poems that shows progress
- First and final draft of the same essay

- Dictation samples
- Copywork samples
- Few pages from workbooks (pitch the rest)
- 4H and Awana certificates (4H projects for the previous year)
- Music lesson schedule
- Sports schedules (team sports, dance, gymnastics, swim, gym, etc)
- Photos: with artwork and projects too big to keep
- Photos: field trips, activities
- Field trip/activity log: photos, narrations, forms, ticket stubs, brochures, maps
- Lab reports
- Math: dated samples that show progress (pitch the rest), sample of tests
- Highschool students: grades and transcript, course contracts
- Scope and sequences or table of contents for text books (highlight sections covered)
- Educational games
- Read alouds
- Bibliography of history readings
- Hiking/biking logs
- Lesson plans
- Typing samples
- Leadership and volunteer/service logs
- Apprenticeship logs
- Employment experience
- List of media: audio programs, lectures, sermons, educational youtube videos/DVD's/TV series
- Co-op schedules, class descriptions, photos, samples
- Diagrams, maps, graphs
- Manila envelope with small projects, artwork
- Lapbooks, mini books
- Nature Journal (samples, make photo copies if desired)
- Poetry, composure, hymn, folksong lists
- Timelines, book of centuries
- Bible study log
- Certificates and awards
- Programs from performances
- Log of animal care (pets or farm animals)
- Year-end report