
Curriculum Overview

A Model of Excellence in Education



General Curriculum Philosophy:

- 1) Timpanogos Academy is founded on the principle that *knowledge is the basis for all learning*.
- 2) As the basis of all learning, *knowledge is very powerful*. Therefore, the best way to reduce the gaps among social, economic, and racial groups in America is to *provide equal access to knowledge*.
- 3) Accordingly, Timpanogos Academy rejects the recent notion that teaching “critical thinking skills” should replace the teaching of traditional factual content in the elementary grades. (After all, we hold it to be self evident that “Critical Thinking” is meaningless without a foundation of specific content to think critically *about*.)
- 4) For the same reason, Timpanogos Academy categorically rejects the weighting of process over content, “self-esteem” over achievement, and other constructivist philosophies and methods that either distract or detract from the primary goal of providing knowledge to our students.
- 5) To provide this factual knowledge to our students, and to serve as the primary basis of instruction in all grades, Timpanogos Academy selected the **Core Knowledge** curriculum.
- 6) To this Core Knowledge foundation, we have added the **Saxon** Math and **Shurley** Grammar programs, plus the **Spalding** Reading Method.



Why Core Knowledge?



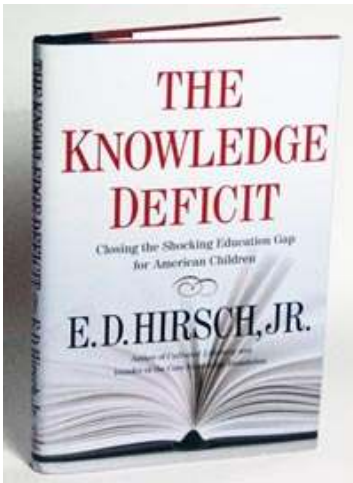
- The Core Knowledge curriculum, developed by E.D. Hirsch of the University of Virginia, begins with the simple principle that **the knowledge that culturally literate people need is not haphazard; it is specific, it can be identified in advance, and teachers can teach it.**
- The *Core Knowledge Sequence* is a detailed outline of specific content to be taught in kindergarten through eighth grade in the areas of language arts, American history, world history, geography, music, visual arts, mathematics, and science.
- The Sequence responds to the idea that elementary and middle schools need a solid, specific, shared core curriculum in order to help children establish strong foundations of knowledge, grade by grade.
- The Core Knowledge curriculum in the elementary school fits perfectly into the first “grammar stage” of classical education when children have a high capacity and motivation to “soak up” a wide range of information, but do not yet have the developmental machinery for critical analysis or expression.
- Students then progress to the “logic stage” of their studies in about grades seven and eight, after which they leave Timpanogos Academy properly prepared to enter high school and begin participating in the “rhetoric stage” of true *critical thinking*.

The Four S's of Core Knowledge:



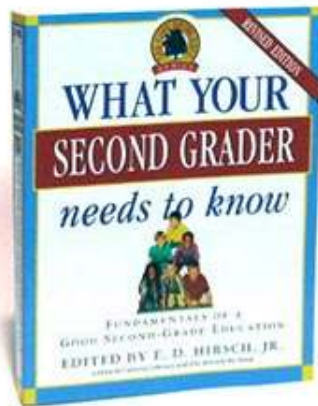
- **Solid** - Many people say that knowledge is changing so fast that what students learn today will soon be outdated. While it is true that events and technology are constantly changing, there is nevertheless a body of lasting knowledge that should form the core of a Preschool-Grade 8 curriculum. Such solid knowledge includes, for example, the basic principles of constitutional government, important events of world history, essential elements of mathematics, oral and written expression, and widely acknowledged masterpieces of art and music.
 - **Sequenced** - Knowledge builds on knowledge. Children learn new knowledge by building on what they already know. For this reason, the Core Knowledge Sequence provides a clear outline of content to be learned grade by grade. This sequential building of knowledge not only helps ensure that children enter each new grade ready to learn, but also helps prevent the many repetitions and gaps that characterize much current schooling (repeated units, for example, on pioneer days or the rain forest, but little or no attention to the Bill of Rights, or to adding fractions with unlike denominators).
 - **Specific** – An all to typical state or district curriculum will say: "Students will demonstrate knowledge of people, events, ideas, and movements that contributed to the development of the United States." But which people and events? What ideas and movements? In contrast, the Core Knowledge Sequence is distinguished by its specificity. By clearly specifying important knowledge in language arts, history and geography, math, science, and the fine arts, the Core Knowledge Sequence presents a practical answer to the question, "What do our children need to know?"
 - **Shared** - Literacy depends on shared knowledge. To be literate means, in part, to be familiar with a broad range of knowledge taken for granted by speakers and writers. For example, when reporters refer to a "threatened presidential veto," they are assuming that their audience shares certain knowledge. One goal of the Core Knowledge Foundation is to provide all children, regardless of background, with the shared knowledge they need to be included in our national literate culture.
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Core Knowledge: Recommended Reading



“The Knowledge Deficit”

The Knowledge Deficit illuminates the real issue in education today -- without an effective curriculum, American students are losing the global education race. In this persuasive book, the esteemed education critic, activist, and best-selling author E.D. Hirsch, Jr., shows that although schools are teaching the mechanics of reading, they fail to convey the knowledge needed for the more complex and essential skill of reading comprehension. Hirsch corrects popular misconceptions about hot issues in education, such as standardized testing, and takes to task educators' claims that they are powerless to overcome class differences. Ultimately, this essential book gives parents and teachers specific tools for enhancing children's abilities to fully understand what they read.

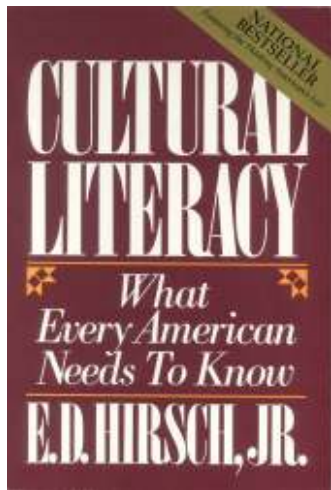


“What Your Second Grader Needs to Know”

In one convenient volume per grade — from *What Your Kindergartner Needs to Know* through *What Your Sixth Grader Needs to Know* — the seven-volume **Core Knowledge Series** provides parents, teachers, and children with an engaging, illustrated introduction to the important knowledge outlined in the *Core Knowledge Sequence*.

Each book suggests related readings and resources. The kindergarten and first grade books also include sections on how children learn to read.

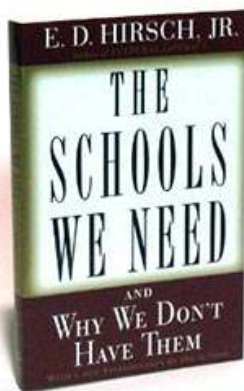
Core Knowledge: Recommended Reading



“Cultural Literacy”

This best-selling, ground-breaking work spells out the theory behind the Core Knowledge® movement. To be able to function and prosper in society, one must possess the background knowledge that literate writers and speakers assume their audiences already share. Those who know it are culturally literate; the opportunities of a free society are open to them. Schools that neglect to impart this core knowledge leave their students seriously deprived and our democracy weakened.

The book includes a list of about 5,000 essential names, phrases, dates, and concepts, intended to illustrate the shared knowledge of literate American culture.



“The Schools we Need & Why we Don’t Have Them”

In *The Schools We Need*, published in 1996, Professor Hirsch traces the philosophies and practices that have dominated American education in this century and shows how failed "progressive" theories have gained a monopoly, despite being discredited by mainstream research. Pragmatic and proven remedies exist and we must turn to them with an open mind, he says, because a sound education is every child's civil right.
