

# HOMESCHOOLING

*A Practical Journal of Home Discipleship*

Since 1992

# Today®

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## Writers' Guidelines

For *Homeschooling Today*® magazine  
*Homeschooling Helper*™ and online publications

Thank you for your interest in our publication. We appreciate the hard work and dedication of our contributors and regular staff who make our magazine the wonderful resource and encouragement our readers have grown to expect.

*Homeschooling Today*® magazine, published four times per year (Spring, Summer, Winter, Fall), is one of the most comprehensive home education magazines available, with a special focus on literature, fine arts, "organic" homeschooling, usable resources, and discipleship parenting.

Our mission is to encourage, challenge, and support homeschooling families. We believe that as we obediently train, educate, and equip our children with a Christian worldview, families will grow stronger and future generations will be prepared for the task of reforming the church and changing society.

### Submissions

*Please carefully read and follow our Writers' Guidelines to increase the chance of acceptance.*

We do not accept queries or reprints at this time. We accept ***unsolicited articles submitted as a Word document (.doc or .docx) attached in e-mail. Macintosh users, convert the file before submission.***

Submit articles to [management@homeschooltoday.com](mailto:management@homeschooltoday.com) with ***Article Submission in the e-mail subject line.*** If submitting for a particular issue, include the *issue date/theme*. We do not return articles.

Unsolicited articles are due by the first day of the month six months prior to the intended issue date:

September 1 for Spring (Mar/Apr/May) issue  
December 1 for Summer (Jun/Jul/Aug) issue  
March 1 for Fall (Sep/Oct/Nov) issue  
June 1 for Winter (Dec/Jan/Feb) issue

We receive a large number of unsolicited articles, so we appreciate your patience in our review process. Please notify us when simultaneously submitting to several publications. If you have not heard from us within six months, you may assume we will not use your article. After six months, we occasionally resurrect an old article that perfectly fits a need. We always contact an author for availability of an article that is we have had for over six months. **We do not send notification if we decide not to publish an article.**

Submission does not guarantee publication. We notify authors of selected articles and e-mail a contract for signature and return by fax, mail, or e-mail attachment.

## Magazine Themes

It is not always possible (or preferable) for every article to fit into our issue theme; however, our readers have shown an interest in this format. Please browse our theme list for ideas and inspiration. Each theme includes a submission deadline. Our current themes and deadlines are on the *Homeschooling Today* website at <http://www.homeschooltoday.com/contact/contribute.htm>.

## Article Types

We currently have four main types of articles in our magazine and additional articles for our online publications:

- **Columns**
  - Hearth and Homeschool (encouragement for moms from moms, 875 words)—accepting submissions for this
  - Father’s Heart (spiritual foundations for fathers and parents, 500–600 words)—written by a regular columnist
  - The FirstYear (encouragement and help for new homeschoolers, 920 words)—written by a regular columnist
- **Feature Articles** (1,400–2,000 words including any sidebars)
- **Departments** (500–875 words)
- **Reviews** (150–475 words or 150 words per product for multiple products in one review)
- **Online**
  - *Homeschooling Helper*<sup>TM</sup> eNewsletter (500–600 words)
  - *The FirstYear*<sup>TM</sup> eNewsletter (currently not taking submissions—contact for future submissions)
  - *The Father-Led Home*<sup>TM</sup> eNewsletter (500–800 words)

Consider the category when submitting. We are more likely to use feature articles related to the theme. Inquire about submissions for columns/departments with regular writers—they could change.

## Feature Articles

Good feature articles relating to the theme include information about a topic, unit studies, encouragement, challenge, or an interview. Feature article word count is 1,400 to 2,000 words including any sidebars. See **Payment Schedule** below for payment guidelines.

## Departments

Not all departments are included in every issue. Word count for articles in the various departments is generally 500–900 words. See **Payment Schedule** below for payment guidelines.

We currently have regular writers for the following departments:

- Abacus—Family Math
- Activity Calendars
- Bookshelf and Beyond (reviews) – Contact Scott at reviews@HomeschoolToday.com to submit products for potential review
- Exploring God’s Creation (nature activities)
- Exploring Art (history/artist study)
- Focus on Writing
- Heart-to-Art (art instruction)
- His History (history activities)
- Literature through the Centuries (classics/author study)
- Living Literature
- Legacy of Great Hymns
- Lessons for Little Ones
- Mom-to-Mom
- Music through the Centuries (history/musician study)
- Nature in Life (nature study)
- Venture Forth (family entrepreneurial topic)
- Ways of Her Household

**In addition to feature articles, we accept submissions for the following departments that do not have regular writers.** Not all departments are included in every issue.

- The Art of Homemaking – 500–875 words
- Bringing History to Life – 500–875 words
- Faces of Homeschooling (true stories about real homeschooling families) – 500–875 words
- The Good Way (godly childrearing and Christian family living) – 500–875 words
- Hearth and Homeschool (encouragement for moms) – 970 words
- The Home Team (physical education) – 500–875 words
- Homeschooling around the World – 500–875 words
- In the Word (family Bible study) – 500–875 words
- Language Learning (English and foreign languages) – 500–875 words
- Making Melody (musical instruction/enjoyment) – 500–875 words
- Science (philosophy and/or activity related) – 500–875 words
- Thinking (logic, biblical thinking) – 500–875 words
- Unit Study – 875–1500 words

We accept nondepartment submissions on practical, homeschool-related topics. These “shorts” are between 150 and 400 words on topics such as “Six Things to Do with Toddlers while Homeschooling,” “Three Verses to Encourage You during the Day,” or “Five Ways to Save on Curriculum.”

## ***Homeschooling Helper* and Online Publications**

*Homeschooling Today's* online eNewsletter, *Homeschooling Helper*<sup>™</sup>, sent monthly, free to a subscription-based e-mail list—an inspirational article (500–600 words) to encourage and refresh homeschooling parents in their day-to-day homeschooling journey (*not* a “how-to” article). For subscription information and a sample of a recent article visit [www.homeschooltoday.com/newsletters](http://www.homeschooltoday.com/newsletters).

*The FirstYear*<sup>™</sup> eNewsletter provides weekly encouragement, practical tips and ideas, and home-friendly methods for teaching—especially during the daunting first years.

*The Father-Led Home*<sup>™</sup> eNewsletter (500 to 700 words) inspires fathers with teaching and encouragement from today's foremost speakers and writers and ordinary dads.

## **Reviews**

Since thousands of homeschoolers count on our reviewers when making book and curriculum decisions, reviewers should remember that different families have different standards and warn parents of any objectionable, unpleasant, or secular content. Always focus on the good in a product while warning about the negative. Rather than unfavorably review material that we would not recommend, we choose not to publish a review on those products at all.

Reviews of books, curriculum, and media/computer programs appear in our “Bookshelf and Beyond” department. To send materials for review consideration, go to [reviews@HomeschoolToday.com](mailto:reviews@HomeschoolToday.com).

We receive many unsolicited books and materials for possible review. If you would like more information on becoming a reviewer, please contact Scott Cottrill at [Scottrill17@hotmail.com](mailto:Scottrill17@hotmail.com).

Reviewers should follow the **Formatting and Style Guidelines** and these additional requirements:

- In book reviews, give complete publication information (title, author, publisher, date) *within the text of the review* (see **References** section below). Retail price of the product is helpful and a phone number or website for hard-to-find products or books, such as self-published materials.
- Include *a bio of up to twenty-five words* (without a URL) in the first page footer (see template). *For reviews of several related products in one article*, multiply the number of review items by 150 words. For reviews of only one or two items, word count should be no more than 475 words.
- We make exceptions for feature review articles, reviews that include an interview, or certain curricula that you simply *cannot* describe in so few words. If you feel that your review falls into such a category, please advise us when you submit your article. We will evaluate our space restrictions. You must be prepared to shorten it if we cannot accommodate the longer length.
- Contact [Charles@homeschooltoday.com](mailto:Charles@homeschooltoday.com) before returning review products. We ask you to return them *media rate* upon completion of the review, but we will advise if you should send the product back a faster way. We will reimburse your return postage after we determine the best way to return products. If you already own the item you are reviewing or can locate it at the library, please advise us. You **must ask** to keep the reviewed product, if you prefer that option in lieu of payment. We do not promise to accommodate that request.

## Payment Schedule

We pay for published articles in one of the following ways:

- Ten cents per *published* word for original, unpublished works in print publications—This option and works used online (below) include a bio of up to fifty (50) words that may include an e-mail address for contact but not a URL.
- Advertising bio in lieu of cash payment—Include a bio of up to one hundred (100) words that includes any of the following: personal information, education, accomplishments, family, business and product info, and contact info that you would like to share, including website and phone number.
- Eight cents per published word for original, unpublished works in online media with above bio requirements
- Ten cents per published word for reviews in “Bookshelf and Beyond” plus reimbursement for return postage for the book/product—Reviewers should read the specific **Reviews** section (above) for postage guidelines as well as general guidelines.
- Final published word count, which is the basis for payment, includes the *text of the edited and published article and any resource list*. It does not include the author’s personal information, the title, byline, or author bio.
- Fifty dollars flat rate or ten cents per published word (whichever is less) for reprints (when accepted on rare occasion) of previously published works (with proof—e-mail or statement in some form from the original publisher—that author owns copyright for reprint).

**Published word count will likely differ from the articles’ original word count.**

**We acquire first North American serial rights and nonexclusive electronic and reprint rights for previously unpublished work. The author retains the copyright to his own work in order to use it for personal purposes (author’s websites, future publications, and so forth).**

**Using articles as reprints in other publications:** We require that any original *Homeschooling Today* magazine article reprinted in another publication or website include a copy of this statement: “Originally published in *Homeschooling Today*<sup>®</sup> magazine—(issue date). Used by permission. All rights reserved.” or “Originally published in Homeschooling Helper online newsletter—(date). Used by permission. All rights reserved.” Please send us an e-mail notice of republication for our records.

## Article Tone

We encourage our writers to be bold in presenting biblical truth in a godly way. Most of our readers are brothers and sisters in Christ, so please align your writing style with the mindset of the teaching in Matthew 5:3-16 and John 17:11-26.

## Formatting and Style Guidelines

### Format

In an effort to publish the highest quality publications, we ask that you use the following format when submitting articles. Failure to follow these guidelines may result in rejection of your submission or the return of your article for reformatting, if we choose to use it.

If you are unfamiliar with the mechanics of formatting in Word and you do not understand the format instructions below, please contact us for assistance. E-mail Marilyn@MarilynRockett.com.

Please download the article template (formatted properly) from our website to make your formatting task easier: [www.homeschooltoday.com/contact/contribute.htm](http://www.homeschooltoday.com/contact/contribute.htm) or use the following guidelines:

- Use **12 pt Times New Roman type** for the entire article, including title and subheadings.
- In the top left corner of the first-page header only, please type (single spaced) *your name, address, phone number, fax number, e-mail address, and word count of the body of the article* (not including author info, title, or bio). The template is formatted for automated word count, so you can update the word count by simply right clicking on the number and choosing “Update Field.” This will put the new count into the space. This preliminary word count may not reflect the final published word count. You must double click within the header (and footer) to add text or make changes.
- Following author info, center the article title in the first-page header in bold type. Put your name centered *two single spaces* below the title following the word *by* (by Your Name) and not in bold.
- Format your article using single spacing with 12 pt Before and 0 pt After (Template is formatted this way – Format/Paragraph/Spacing – Before: 12 pt and After: 0 pt). There should be no double hard returns (hitting Enter twice) in the article.
- Use one hard return (hit Enter once) between paragraphs, which should space two single spaces if you have used the above format correctly.
- *Do not* number pages or include headers (except first-page header/footer only for author info/article title in header and bio in footer).
- *Do not* indent.
- Align your article left. Please do not justify it.
- **Use only one space (after end punctuation) between sentences in the article.**
- Use bold type (12 pt Times New Roman) for title and subheadings in your article. Do not use all caps or italics. Do not use underlining.
- Do not use special formatting. You may use bold and italics when appropriate, such as italics for word emphasis, titles of books, magazines, and so forth; and use bold for article title and subheadings within the article.
- Do not use automatic footnoting or endnotes. See **Quotations** and **References and Material Recommendations** sections for including reference notes.
- In the first page footer, include a maximum fifty-word bio or a maximum twenty-five-word bio for a review (subject to editing). See **Payment Schedule** for longer bio/payment option. Please indicate the bio word count in the yellow bar above the bio itself.
- Please spell check and proof your article before submitting it.

## Style

Following is an abbreviated style guide. We generally follow *The Chicago Manual of Style* (current edition). These items are our preference, and we will follow them in the editing process. Please contact us with any questions.

## Punctuation

- Use a comma before the final item in a list or series that contains more than two items (textbooks, pencils, and notebooks).
- Use semicolons between items in a series if there are commas within the series. (Bring your book, pencil, and notebook to the table; open your book to page fifteen; and work quietly until I can sit down with you.)
- Do not use a comma when noting a month and year (August 2003).
- Use ellipsis points (. . .) to indicate a break in a quotation. Leave one space before, after, and in-between each point (word . . . word, not word ... word). When an ellipsis comes between sentences or complete thoughts in a quotation, place the usual period or proper punctuation at the end of the sentence followed by three ellipsis points as spaced above. Do not use ellipsis points at the beginning of a quotation.
- Use an em dash (double hyphen—or ctrl + Number keypad hit twice) with no space between dash and words before and after it for a break in thought or for emphasis in a sentence. (He won the race—and by four seconds!)
- Use italics to emphasize words. *Do not* use all caps, bold, or underlining for emphasis. Good writing does not overuse emphasis.
- Use italics for foreign words and phrases (*semper fidelis*). Do not italicize familiar foreign words and phrases listed in the dictionary if used in an English context; spell them as in the dictionary (e.g., eros, agape, invitro).
- Use italics for words as words: “The word *carol* comes from a medieval word of French and Anglo-Norman origin believed to mean a dance song or a circle dance accompanied by singing.”
- Use italics for titles of books, magazines (including *Homeschooling Today*<sup>®</sup> magazine), and other publications. Use quotation marks for titles of articles or essays.

## Spelling and Capitalization

- Homeschool and its derivatives (homeschooled, homeschooling, homeschoolers)—one word
- okay
- nonprofit
- coauthor
- website
- e-mail
- Internet
- Use lower case when using theological terms in a broad sense [church, the gospel (but the Gospels when referring to the books of the Bible and Scripture when referring to the Bible), the kingdom, the second coming, biblical, scriptural, and so forth].
- Capitalize words used to refer to God [He and Him (but not his and who), the Trinity, the Almighty, the Word, Christ, Holy Spirit, Holy Ghost, and so forth].

## Abbreviations and Contractions

- Do not abbreviate months of the year or names of states.
- Do not abbreviate books of the Bible.
- When the name of an organization that also has an abbreviated name is written repeatedly, the name should be written in full the first time followed by the abbreviation in parentheses. After the first reference, use the abbreviation. [*Homeschooling Today*® magazine (HST) publishes an issue four times a year. This year HST will add more resources for their readers.]
- Generally, do not use contractions unless omitting them will cause the sentence to sound stilted or unless the style of the article requires them. Even then, do not overuse.

## Numbers and Symbols

- Spell out numbers through one hundred; use all numbers beginning with 101 and up numerically. Spell out whole numbers followed by *hundred, thousand, hundred thousand, million*, and so on (three hundred, five hundred thousand, two hundred million).
- Write out numbers referring to age (seven years old and my five-year-old son).
- To indicate percent, use numerals and the word *percent* (25 percent).

### Years:

- Write inclusive years as 1998–99, not 1998–1999 (except 1999–2001).
- Write centuries as 500 B.C. and A.D. 1525.
- 1900s, not 1900's
- Do not use apostrophes in decades (1950s, not 50's).
- Write out numbers of centuries (in the fifteenth century, not 15th century).
- Use a hyphen for adjectival forms (fifteenth-century art).

## Quotations

- *Always* indicate quotations (as follows) for any written or spoken words from others. Be careful to record quotes *exactly* as you find them in your source. Light paraphrasing is not a substitute for attributing quotations.
- Use double quotation marks for short quotes within the main text of the article, including Scripture verses.
- Separate all quotations (including Scripture) of four or more lines from the text in a block quote, indented one half-inch on the left *and* right and separated from the text above and below it by two single spaces. Use italics (no quotation marks) for the quoted material. (Set off with double quotation marks any quoted matter *within* a block quotation.)
- For a block quote set apart in italics and indented, use a colon instead of a comma following the last word before the quote begins.

Martin Luther lamented:

*Who am I, that I should lift up mine eyes or raise my hands . . .*

- Quote Scripture accurately, including punctuation in the verse(s). Spell out the book name. Use Roman numerals: I Corinthians, II Peter. Use the King James Version (KJV), New King James

Version (NKJV), English Standard Version (ESV), or New American Standard Bible (NASB). Follow a quote with the reference and the initials of the version quoted in parentheses: “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life” (John 6:47, NASB). It isn’t necessary to reference the KJV since it is in public domain.

- When referencing scriptural truth, you don’t need to give a reference unless you want to note a verse that teaches that truth. For example, God tells us to impress on our children how to love Him with all of our being (emotions, thoughts, physical strength, etc.) as we daily go through life (Deuteronomy 6).
- **When quoting material, provide the source of the quote** in parentheses following the quote. Martin Luther lamented, “Who am I, that I should lift up mine eyes or raise my hands to the divine Majesty?” (*Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* by Roland Bainton, Abingdon Press, 1950). For reprints (*Farmer Boy* by Laura Ingalls Wilder, 1933; reprinted, Harper & Row, 1971). Our editorial staff will determine if they should move this source info out of the text, but we need the information.
- **When quoting from material that you list as recommended at the end of the article**—it is not necessary to provide full publication information in the text (as above). Only the book title and the author’s last name should be included following any quote from that source. (*Here I Stand*, Bainton).
- You may omit the author’s name in parentheses if you mention it in the text—Roland Bainton quoted Martin Luther as saying, “Who am I, that I should lift up mine eyes or raise my hands to the divine Majesty?” (*Here I Stand*).

## References and Material Recommendations

- **References to books, magazines, etc. within the text of the article** should state title and author together and list publisher and date in parentheses following the reference—*The Giver* by Lois Lowry (Random House, 1993)—or reprints of older works—*Farmer Boy* by Laura Ingalls Wilder (1933; reprinted, Harper & Row, 1971).
- **If you recommend multiple books or materials as an additional part of your article**, please use a list of Recommended Resources at the bottom of the entire article rather than on each page of the article (no footnotes). Include, in this order: book, author, publisher, and date—*The Giver* by Lois Lowry (Random House, 1993)
- No page number is required for any reference or source of quote except as follows: Include page numbers (inclusive) for periodical and journal articles in a resource list, though not for individual quotes in the article text. (*NAASP Bulletin*, November 1996, pp. 55–64).
- **Please verify all websites** to make sure that they are still active, appropriate, and do not link to objectionable material on other sites. List websites as www instead of http://www except when necessary to pull up the site. If you are quoting material from a website, specify the date on which you retrieved information (www.homeschooltoday.com, retrieved June 2011).

For questions/suggestions, please contact Marilyn@HomeschoolToday.com. We welcome your thoughts and thank you for considering our publications for your writing and ministry.