

Chapter One



The Transformation of Classical Education: A Biblical Vision for Homeschooling

And be not conformed to this world:
but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind,
that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.
— Romans 12:2

❧ BREAKING OUT OF THE MOLD ❧

Have you ever experienced the frustration of trying to make things fit – but they just won’t go together? Something is the wrong shape, or size, or color, so the pieces just won’t match. That’s just what we’ve found with trying to fit Homeschooling into a classroom mold, and trying to

match traditional classical education with Biblical Christianity. Things just don't go together. Something must be changed. This book is an attempt to make that change.

Our Lord speaks a parable which addresses these very issues. He begins with a story about old garments and new patches.

And he spake also a parable unto them; No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was *taken* out of the new agreeth not with the old. — Luke 5:36

The shrinkage rate is different for various fabrics and between new unwashed cloth and old pre-washed cloth. From these observations, we derive the principle that we cannot just try to patch together two things of dissimilar fabrics or natures. If we do, then things may look fine at first, but when the patched garment comes out of the wash, we will see that the problem has actually become worse. The old garment is more torn than before, and the new patch doesn't match. Of course, our Lord was talking about how the things of the Gospel could not be patched onto the things of the Law, but this principle applies to other things as well. What this parable describes is precisely what we found when we tried to homeschool by a classroom model. Things fell apart in the wash. Chapters Two and Three will cover some of the reasons why the two just won't fit together.

Our Lord continues His parable with a story about new wine and old wineskins.

And no man putteth new wine into old bottles [/wineskins]; else the new wine will burst the bottles [/wineskins], and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. But new wine must be put into new bottles [/wineskins]; and both are preserved. — Luke 5:37,38

When fresh wine is stored in fresh wineskins, the wineskins bulge and stretch. But once the wineskins have been stretched, their stretching quality is lost. Filling them with fresh wine only makes them bulge until they break. From these observations, we derive the principle that we must not put new and living spiritual things into old and dead carnal containers which will not stretch. If we try, then we end up losing both the new and the old. But if we put the old aside, and we put the new things in new containers, then both are preserved. Of course, our Lord was talking about how the spiritual things of the New Covenant could not be contained within the administration of the Old Covenant, but the principle fits with other situations as well. We have found that when we tried to fit Biblical Christianity within the old and dead carnal con-

tainer of classical education and the Greek Academy, that the latter was burst and the former was spilled. Chapters Four through Ten will touch on many of these bursts and spills.

Our Lord concludes His parable with a word about old and new tastes.

No man also having drunk old *wine* straightway desireth new: for he saith,
The old is better. — Luke 5:39

If you're satisfied with one thing, then you're reluctant to change to another. Ain't it the truth! Jesus was, of course, referring to how those who had lived their whole lives under the Law of Moses were reluctant to embrace the Law of Christ. There is something good about this predisposition toward conservatism. It keeps us from making rash changes and it preserves continuity. But when the situation truly demands a change, conservatism becomes a difficult obstacle which must be overcome. The conservatives are actually afraid of the unfamiliar. They'll give you a grocery list for why they shouldn't change. It'll upset things. Yes. It'll require new work. Yes. It'll force us to rethink things. Yes. Then they will require an argument from you for everything. Well, this whole book is an argument. We are attempting to write a different charter for classical education. Let's begin with some definitions.

❧ WHAT IS CLASSICAL EDUCATION? ❧

Classical Humanism

Is “Classical Education” reading Homer and Plato, or Caesar and Cicero? There are some who declare that reading such ancient classical authors is the very essence of any education which could be styled *classical*. But we believe a more accurate name for this would be a “Classical *Humanist* Education.” A humanist in the classical sense is one who studies what are called the “humanities,” primarily classical Greek and Roman literature.

The Renaissance – the rebirth of learning (1350-1650) – involved a rebirth of the humanist philosophy and culture of ancient Greece and Rome. There was nothing Christian about this ancient philosophy and culture. If we defined *classical* by this humanist standard, then we could not avoid the influence of its philosophy and culture. Indeed, an unbound and unbalanced focus upon classical Greek and Roman literature would drive us in every direction except toward Christ. So, do we want to be identified with Classical Humanist Education?

hast known the holy Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. — Second Timothy 1:3,5; 3:14,15

THE BROADER IMPLICATIONS OF THIS COMMANDMENT

Our culture is being manipulated to worship the state. We see the state as a god, with the right to control everything which it chooses. The state is being endowed with powers for controlling the destiny of its human resources – the power of predestination. Our culture teaches us to think of the state as having a natural right to control the education of children for the sake of society, because, after all, the democratic state is the embodiment of society. Our culture teaches us that the state has a *compelling interest* in its own survival and success. Hence the state must own the children, for the children are the future. Though this doctrine is rarely stated in such explicit terms, it is nevertheless the implicit declaration of virtually all state programs. The state seeks to be omniscient – to know everything about us. The state seeks to be omnipresent – to be everywhere in our lives. The state seeks to be omnipotent – to control everything in society. *The state is the incarnation of the god of humanism.* Man, through the state, has become the measure of all things. The promise of the tempter in the Garden of Eden is at last fulfilled in the socialist state. Man is as a god, determining for himself what is good and evil – measuring everything by his own invented standards, apart from God’s revealed standards.

There is only one way to defeat the socialist state. It is not with political machinery and votes. It is not with petitions and protests. It is with godly, parent-controlled education of their own children. Socialism breaks down the natural bond between parents and children – that is a necessary part of the socialist program. Unless those bonds are broken, the state cannot gain power to control the future. Parent-controlled education thwarts that purpose. Hence the socialist state has worked hard to turn the parental bond into a liability and to make it desirable for parents to sever that bond wherever and whenever it is possible.

From a practical point of view, Homeschooling is strongly out of favor with the socialist state, because it strengthens that parent-child bond which controls the future. The family is socialism’s public enemy number one, and practicing Biblical Christianity is a hate crime against the state.

The state did not give birth to our children, neither did it give our children to us, neither can we trust it to raise them for us, neither should we let the state take them from us.

Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is His reward. — Psalm 127:3

Children are placed under the authority, and protection, and tutelage, not of the government, nor of the church, but of the parents. Parents are accountable to God for how their children are raised. Barring unusual and unavoidable circumstances, we – the parents – will answer to God for who raises our child, and for how they are raised. God is not going to place the primary blame for any failures upon the government, or upon the church, but upon us, the parents.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. . . . And, ye fathers . . . bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. — Ephesians 6:1,4

In 1973, when we were just married, we both agreed at that time that we would never send our children off to schools controlled by the state. Our commitment was not a reaction to the condition of socialized education. At that time, the state-controlled schools were not nearly so overtly-dangerous as they are today. Our conscious commitment to parent-controlled and parent-directed education began when we both took a marriage vow to raise our children in the fear of the Lord. Our commitment at that time was philosophical. We alone, as parents, have the authority under God, and the responsibility before God, to raise our children in the knowledge and fear of God.

Since that time, we have developed many other reasons for Home-schooling, but all reasons remain subordinate to this one. We know some people do not like it when we speak against state-controlled education. But our opposition to public education is not to the academic quality of the education – as bad as that can sometimes get, nor is it to the godlessness of the curriculum – though that also is a serious consideration, nor is it to the dangers of the classroom – though that has become a very serious consideration as well. All of these things are only the inescapable moral consequences of one fundamental error: acting contrary to God's order by removing from parents their control in education, and giving it to someone else, such as the state or the church.

This duty rests with the parent. Such is the Protestant doctrine – the Bible doctrine. Neither State nor Church are to usurp it; but both are to enlighten,

way to where we belong. Just point us in the right direction and help us to make some progress on our journey.

✿ TEN PROBLEMS WITH CLASSROOM SCHOOLS ✿

We list below a few of the problems which persist in large gender-mixed, age-segregated, day-long classroom schools. (As long as we are stirring up controversy – many homeschoolers have awakened to the fact that the following problems also apply to gender-mixed and age-segregated Sunday schools, youth groups, and similar situations. But that's the subject of another book.)

1. *Classroom schools create bonds which can easily cross and oppose the proper bonds of authority and affection.*

For example:

The teacher-to-student bond may weaken the parent-to-child bond.

The school-to-student bond may weaken the family-to-child bond.

The student-to-student bond may weaken the sibling-to-sibling bond.

The parent-to-school bond may weaken the father-to-mother bond.

There is enormous potential for the alienation of appropriate lines of affections, and the engendering of inappropriate lines of affections. Under the Lord, parental authority is the whole foundation for instruction. Respect for parental authority is undermined, diluted, and broken down, when, in the minds of the children, other authorities are exalted above their parents. Do the children understand who has authority over them? Trust is undermined whenever authority is confused.

In 1985, we were involved in an attempt to found a private school. Despite working very hard at setting up this school, organizing schedules, and deciding upon a curriculum, one problem persisted: no students. Efforts at arousing sufficient interest in such a school failed. Our own children would undoubtedly have attended the school. Instead, we moved away and continued to pursue Homeschooling. At that time, we were quite disappointed. We did not then understand, as we do now, the real value of Homeschooling.

Most children who attend a classroom school – private or government, Christian or secular, classical or modern – are pulled toward their peers. They bond with their peers, and they are drawn away from their

parents. The authority of the parents is undermined – subtly and perhaps quite unintentionally, but nevertheless most unavoidably. In *The Socialization Trap*, Rick Boyer remarks, “Peer socialization breaks down family relationships. . . . [it] separates kids both from their siblings and their parents through time commitments, interests and emotional bonding.” Oh, sure, the child stills loves mommy and daddy to some degree. But the heart, the affections, the attentions, the very life of the child becomes bound up with his peers. Parents lose the hearts of their children.

If you had asked us in 1980 why we homeschooled our children, we would have responded that we wanted our children to receive a good education. We wanted them to learn Latin and Greek. Today, we would tell you that we homeschool because we don’t want our children to be socially bonded to their peer group. We want to keep the hearts of our children where they ought to be, with their parents and family, until it is time for them to marry and to leave home. We parents need the sanctification which comes from teaching our children, and our children need the same from us. So, even if we couldn’t teach them Latin and Greek, we would still homeschool them.

*2. Classroom schools can create an atmosphere
of ungodly rivalry instead of godly challenge.*

When peers are put together in a graded context, the natural result is comparison – not against an absolute standard, but against each other, which breeds a fleshly competition and rivalry.

We quote here a passage which appears to illustrate this point. During the Civil War, Augusta Jane Evans wrote the book, *Marcaria; or, Altars of Sacrifice*. Evans was educated at home by her mother. She had studied Latin and Greek and was well read in the classics. The main character of her book is Irene, a sweet southern belle of fifteen years, who was sent off to a prestigious boarding school in New York.

As tall tyrannous weeds and rank unshorn grass close over and crush our slender, pure, odorous flowerets on a hill-side, so the defects of Irene’s character swiftly strengthened and developed in the new atmosphere in which she found herself. All the fostering stimulus of a hot-bed seemed applied to them, and her nobler impulses were in imminent danger of being entirely subdued. . . . and the associations which surrounded Irene were well calculated to destroy the native purity and unselfishness of her nature. The school was on an extensive scale, thoroughly fashionable, and thither pupils were sent from every section of the United States. As regarded educational advan-

7. *Latin is useful in English.* Many of us learned some Spanish, German, or French in high school or college. How much of it do we use? Most of us use it very little, if at all. The general rule applies well to languages, “If we do not use it, then we will lose it.” So, for many of us, much of this effort went to waste. We could have used the time much more wisely studying Latin, because everyone who learns Latin vocabulary and grammar will use it often, even if he continues his studies only in English.

For millennia, the classical languages were considered an essential part of education. Why? Because of all of their benefits to learning. Many of those benefits survive until today in different strengths.

Here are some interesting quotes on the study of classical languages.

“I have become convinced that of all that human language has produced truly and simply beautiful, I knew nothing before I learned Greek. . . . Without a knowledge of Greek there is no education.” — Leo Tolstoy, Russian novelist, author of *War and Peace*. (He learned Greek at the age of 42.)

“I began to realize as I read the Greek classics that I could not really draw valid inferences from translations. So I began to study Greek. I am having a wonderful time! I did not intend to get drawn in this far, but the further I get, the more enchanting it is.” — I.F. Stone, Journalist, Writer, Distinguished Scholar in Residence, American University. (He taught himself Greek at the age of 70, beginning a new career.)

“I would make everyone learn English; then I would let the clever ones learn Latin as an honor – and Greek as a treat.” — Sir Winston Churchill, Writer, Prime Minister of England.

Our conclusion is: generally speaking, ones time is best spent learning Latin, Greek and Hebrew. Latin, because it is most useful for further studies in English as well as in other languages. Greek, for the same reasons, and because it is most useful in understanding Scripture. Hebrew, because it is most useful in understanding Scripture and Biblical culture.

Knowing these three languages will give the student a large and useful tool kit for all of his studies. We will now attempt to present some practical information on teaching languages.


 PRINCIPLES FOR LEARNING LANGUAGES
 

Which Languages to Study?

We believe that Greek, Latin, and Hebrew should receive first consideration of all the classical languages. These three languages hold the most practical usefulness for ordinary Christians.

Nevertheless, on a realistic level, one student or one family may not be able to pursue the classical languages as aggressively as others might. You are the best judge of your own resources, circumstances, and the Lord's special direction for your family. You may have special reasons for pursuing other languages in addition to or instead of any or all of the three classical languages which we have recommended. Perhaps you are assured that you will spend a few years in Germany. You would then have a special reason for giving the study of German a higher priority. You may be adopting a Russian child. You would then give a higher priority to gaining some familiarity and skill with Russian.

We know that God calls each of us to specific venues, and we have no authority to impress a "one-size-fits-all" curriculum upon everybody. Each family must determine its own goals. Some classical "snobs" might look down upon a decision to drop one or more of these classical languages. That is their problem, and not necessarily yours. In this section, we want to give you some criteria for determining your priorities in pursuing the classical languages.

If Only One Language, Then Greek

If you choose to pursue only one language, then we recommend *Koine Greek* (also called *Hellenistic Greek*), which is the language of the New Testament. We recommend Koine Greek because of its value in Biblical study. Not only is the New Testament written in Koine Greek, but there is also a Koine Greek version of the Old Testament. The early church fathers also wrote in Koine Greek, as did the Jewish historian Josephus. Koine Greek is not exactly the same as classical Greek, but the bridge between the two is short, should anyone need to cross it.

If Two Languages, Then Latin and Greek

If you choose to pursue two languages, then we recommend first Latin, then Greek. Latin uses the same alphabet as English, but with a slightly different pronunciation. The Latin vocabulary alone will prove very valuable in other studies – studies in English proper, as well as specialized studies in science, medicine, law, and other disciplines. Because most of

originally designed only for the little language known as Latin.) Let's take a glance at the three ancient alphabets.

LATIN ALPHABET & CORRESPONDING ENGLISH LETTERS

Latin Alphabet	ABCDEF GHIJKLMNOPQRSTU—VWXYZ
	a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v — x y z
English Letters	ABCDEF GHIJKLMNOPQRSTU—VWXYZ
	a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

FIGURE 5B

As you can see, the Latin letters directly correspond, one-to-one, with the English letters, except no Latin letter corresponds to our English W. (Actually, Double-U is related to U and V.) (Also, K, X, Y, and Z were rarely used, and J and V are modern inventions to take the place of the consonantal use of I and U.) Most of the consonants are pronounced the same in both languages, except Latin has only one sound for each consonant (C and G each have only one sound). The vowel pronunciations are the main difference. Each Latin vowel has only one basic sound, but two lengths: short and long. (Compare English, where, for example, the letter *a* has three basic sounds: *bat*, *bait*, *ball*.) In modern Latin grammar texts, macrons (a horizontal line) are placed above the long vowels *ā ē ī ō ū*. (We explain the vowels in more detail in Appendix One, Article Eight, A Comparison of Ancient Alphabets.) So with Latin, we do not need to learn a new alphabet; we only need to learn a few different pronunciations.

Our comments are based upon the *restored classical* system of pronunciation for Latin. This is a reasonable attempt to restore the way the ancients pronounced the language. Unless you have some special reason for adopting the *ecclesiastical* (Italian) system of pronunciation, as is used in the Roman Catholic church, or some other more modern system of pronunciation, we recommend the restored classical for two simple reasons: 1) in the long run, it will be less confusing; 2) most of the new literature is based upon it.

GREEK ALPHABET & CORRESPONDING ENGLISH LETTERS

Greek Alphabet	A	B		Γ	Δ	E		Z	H	Θ	I		K	Λ				
	α	β		γ	δ	ε		ζ	η	θ	ι		κ	λ				
English Letters	A	B	C	G	D	E	F	Z	H		I	J	K	L				
	a	b	c	g	d	e	f	z	h		i	j	k	l				

Greek Alphabet	M	N	Ξ	O	Π		P	Σ	T	Υ	Φ	X	Ψ	Ω				
	μ	ν	ξ	ο	π		ρ	σ	τ	υ	φ	χ	ψ	ω				
English Letters	M	N	X	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U					V	W	Y	
	m	n	x	o	p	q	r	s	t	u					v	w	y	

FIGURE 5C

The letters are listed in Greek alphabetical order, which, as you can see, does not necessarily agree with English alphabetical order. For example, the Greek letters Γ Ζ Ξ correspond to the English letters G Z X, but are out of English order. Many Greek letters look like English letters: A B E Z H I K M N O P T Υ X. But they don't necessarily correspond to the English letter which they look like. What looks like a P is actually an R. What looks like a Υ is actually a U. And the letters which look like English letters do not necessarily sound the same as the English letters. For example, Greek H is a vowel with the long A sound. Greek X has a hard rough KH sound. There are seven Greek vowels, A E H I O Υ Ω, which sound like Latin vowels. No English letters directly correspond to the Greek letters Θ Φ X Ψ Ω, and no Greek letters directly correspond to the English letters C F J Q V W Y.

So the Greek alphabet is quite a bit different from English. The pronunciation system also is different. What is worse, if we picked ten Greek grammars from our shelf, we might find ten different systems of pronunciation. Though Ancient Greek was pronounced different ways at different times in different places, there is a way to sort through these pronunciations and arrive at a consistent system. We recommend a system which is consistent within itself, and which accommodates well with ancient Latin. (We explain the pronunciation system in more detail

Chapter Six



Teaching Logic

... no lie is of the truth.
— First John 2:21

✿ AN ARGUMENT FOR TEACHING LOGIC ✿

THE SECOND PART OF THE TRIVIUM is Logic. Every subject has its own *logic* – the proper order and relationship between all of the parts. Logic is the way things fit together – or at least the way they ought to fit together. We want to describe the subject which we call *Logic*, because all of our understanding of every other subject is built upon the framework of this thing we call Logic.

What is Logic?

Logic is the simplest and most elementary of all exact sciences. It is the science of correct reasoning. Every science is occupied with detecting and describing the necessary and unalterable laws which rule a particular field of knowledge. Considered as a science, Logic detects and describes the necessary and unalterable laws of correct reasoning.

example, when we omit teaching the basic principles of phonics, then we interrupt the natural development of written phonetic language learning, and we thereby create the learning dysfunction which we call *dyslexia* – the inability to read. Well, if we omit teaching the basic principles of logic, then we will create the dysfunction which we might call *dyslogia* – the inability to think! Put dyslexia and dyslogia together, and what do you have? Disaster.

The Rejection of Logic Leads to the Rejection of God

Logic is thoroughly dispensed with in modern curricula – except as a tool for manipulation. Nebulous social skills are considered more important than precise thinking skills. Feeling is valued more than discernment. And where some kind of thinking is taught, it is a programmed thinking, not a genuine critical thinking. The child is trained to think with the herd, like an animal, then socialized to run with the animals in the herd. Beware of stampedes – known today as “group consensus.” “Thou shalt not follow a (mindless) multitude to do evil.” (Exodus 23:2)

The child is programmed not to question certain concepts – precisely because they are *not provable*. They have been handed down from the politically correct *gods* by infallible revelation, and none may dare to deeply explore their reasoning.

It is through some form of logical study that we become skilled to discern between truth and error, and therefore between good and evil, and right and wrong (Hebrews 5:14). We cannot obey the truth before we know the truth (Psalm 143:8; John 8:32). We cannot know the truth apart from logic (First John 2:21 – the Law of Non-Contradiction). To reject logic is to reject truth, and to reject truth is to reject God. And that is what modern education is all about – the rejection of the standard of logic, the rejection of absolute truth, and the rejection of the sovereign God. At the heart of everything is the rejection of God, and without the knowledge and fear of God, there is no education.

. . . Behold, the fear of the Lord, that *is* wisdom; and to depart from evil *is* understanding. — Job 28:28

The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do *his commandments*. . . — Psalm 111:10

The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge: *but* fools despise wisdom and instruction. — Proverbs 1:7

The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy *is* understanding. — Proverbs 9:10

(For more arguments from a Christian point of view for studying logic, see the Article, The Christian Use of Logic, found in Appendix One, Article Ten.)

❧ PRINCIPLES FOR LEARNING LOGIC ❧

Defining and Describing Logic

The study of Logic is divided into two parts: *Formal Logic* and *Informal Logic*. We are not talking about a formal *tuxedo* type of logic and an informal *blue jeans* type of logic. The words *Formal* and *Informal* are here used as technical terms.

Formal Logic is the study of the systematic form or structure of argument, such as syllogisms. This includes the abstract rules of logical reasoning which logicians have reduced to a system of mathematic-like formulas. Formal Logic is the foundation for all reasoning, and is therefore also the foundation for what is called *In-formal Logic*.

Informal Logic includes everything which is not classified within in the narrow limits of what we call *Formal Logic*. So *In-formal*, in this instance, simply means *Not-Formal*. *Informal* does not mean it has no form or system, but only that it deals more with the substance of an argument than with its systematic formulation. We might say it is less theoretical and more practical. The subject called *Informal Logic* includes such things as Logical Fallacies and Propaganda. We encounter bad verbal arguments everyday (especially if we are listening to politicians), and *Informal Logic* is concerned with developing methods to detect such arguments and to deal with them.

In this section, we will provide a small taste of logic, along with a few practical ideas about teaching the subject of Logic.

Formal Logic

Formal Logic divides into two fundamentally different types of reasoning: *Deductive* and *Inductive*.

1. *Deductive Reasoning* is the kind of logic which proves things for certain. It describes the laws of necessary inference. With *Deductive Reasoning*, we begin with a few statements which are presumed (for the sake of the argument) to be true, and from these statements we construct an argument which we know (because of the form) must reach a true conclusion. An argument which does not have the correct form is necessarily not valid, and its conclusion cannot be trusted.

Learning to identify errors in logic – such things as Informal Logical Fallacies, Propaganda Techniques, and Methods of Manipulation – often proves useful in evaluating the words of politicians, theologians, plumbers, and neighbors.

Informal Logic will prove quite useful in Rhetoric. Though the distinction between Informal Logic and Rhetoric may sometimes seem blurred, it is still best to teach the branches of Informal Logic separately.

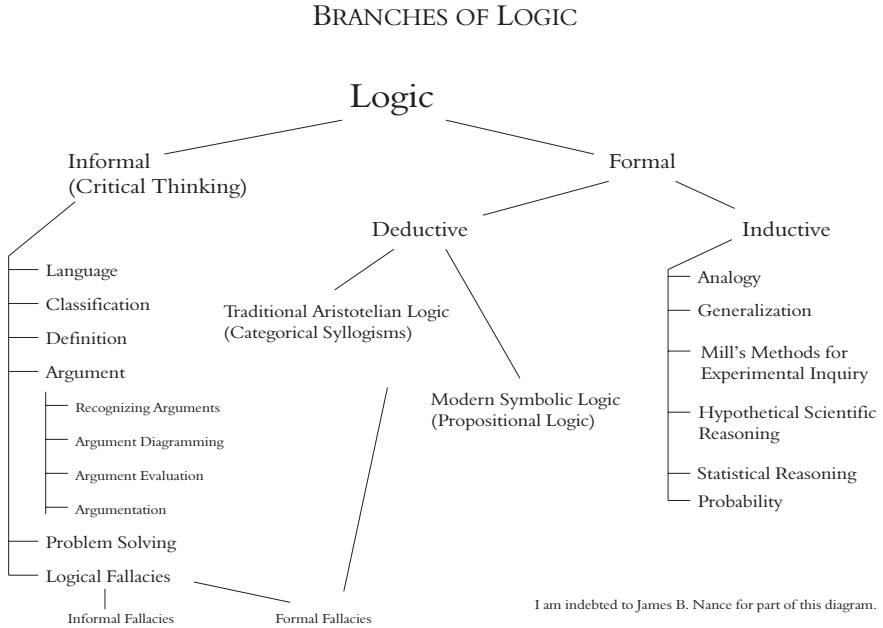


FIGURE 6A

OVERALL OBSERVATIONS

 FOR LEARNING LOGIC

Logic Materials

The perfect logic book has not been written, but many useful ones have, and what is best for one student may be less than best for another student. The most useful logic curriculum which we could put together for homeschoolers would follow this description: