

What is Classical Education?

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Classical Education is the traditional education curriculum that was taught in Europe and the early United States for many centuries.

Classical education emphasizes:

- A “Great Books” approach to education, that is to say reading the classics of the Western Canon. Books will include the classics of the Greeks, Romans, Medieval Europe, the Renaissance, etc. E.g., Homer, Hesiod, Plato, Aristotle, Virgil, Cicero, Livy, Beowulf, Prose Edda, Shakespeare, Descartes, Hume, Goethe, Kant, etc.
- Studying the history of the West, esp. the history of the Ancient Greeks, Romans, Medieval Europe, Renaissance, Scientific Revolution, etc. Added emphasis should be given to history of the Greeks and Romans, which is often repeated in grammar, middle and high school.
- Studying the classical mythology of the West, including Greco-Roman mythology, Germanic mythology, etc.
- Studying the classical art, music and architecture of the West.
- The study of grammar and logic.
- The study of mathematics and current science.
- The appreciation of High Culture, manners, high cuisine (e.g. French cuisine), etc.
- The study of languages. See below for more information on language study.

Language Study

In classical education, the foreign languages offered are Classical Latin, Classical Greek, German, and French. If another language is offered, it’s typically Italian (some people also offer Russian). In the 19th century model, the typical core was Classical Latin and German, as these two languages gave the “keys” to understand two large European language families.

Some schools will also add: Italian. Possibly Russian. Some schools also add Anglo-Saxon or Old Norse.

The main four staple languages, though, have been Classical Latin, Classical Greek, French, and German.

Why do schools mandate these languages? They’re not doing it to be novel. They’re doing it because that’s how classical education has been done for hundreds of years. The

vast majority of scholarship and Great Books of the past 2,000 years are all written in Classical Latin, Classical Greek, German, French or Italian. It's why they hold to this traditional standard.