

Core of Classical Education

I can't teach all the subjects possible. What is the **CORE** of classical education that I must include, if I had to make a choice?

There are two major ideas on how to best implement a modern classical education. The first developed primarily, I believe, from a close adherence to Dorothy Sayer's philosophy of education outlined in [The Lost Tools of Learning](#). In this speech, Ms. Sayers introduced the idea that subjects -- such as grammar, history, or math -- be taught so that the subject is tailored to the student's level of learning, or trivium stage. Certain aspects of the subject would be emphasized during a child's elementary years (the grammar stage), when his focus was on concrete thinking; other aspects were emphasized during the child's middle school years (the dialectic stage) and so on.

This approach has been most popularized by the private classical schools that have sprung up since [Logos School](#) began in Moscow, Idaho. The most vigorous outgrowth of this philosophy has been the premise that there is a distinct grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric way to teach every subject, from art to zoology.

The second major idea is a return to historic classical education. In this approach, the three core subjects of each of the trivium stages become the sole subjects studied during that stage, just as they were historically. Thus, Latin and Greek grammar is studied in the grammar stage -- the elementary years -- with no or few forays into other academics; logic, using Euclid's Elements, is studied in the dialectic stage; and Aristotle's Rhetoric, the art and science of effective and elegant written and spoken communication, is studied in the rhetoric stage.

A correlation can in fact be made between the historic core of classical education: Latin, Euclid, and Rhetoric, and the emphasis on the three R's in American education: reading (grammar), writing (rhetoric), and 'rithmetic (logic, via Euclid's Elements). The historic approach to classical education, with modification, has been most popularized by [Memoria Press](#) in its core curriculum and web articles.

[Historic and Modern Application of the Trivium](#)

[Taking Latin Seriously by Cheryl Lowe](#)

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