

A Checklist for Your Children!

The most important 10 questions to ask:

Are your children and grandchildren learning about the best of our culture? Or will they emerge from school only aware of rock music, pop idols, and celebrities, unable to read, write, or spell, ignorant of our history, good books, and fine music?

Here is a checklist of questions that you need to ask regarding their education and what you need to do if the answer to any question is NO!

- 1. Have they been taught to read using phonics or the “whole-word” or “whole language” method?** Children need to be immediately taught to sound out the letters of the alphabet. Otherwise, they’re not reading, they’re guessing. The solution: a good phonics program.
- 2. Have they been taught cursive writing?** There is an incredible campaign today to drop the study of cursive writing. The result will be doctors, lawyers, and even English teachers who can only print, not write their own names. The solution: insist on cursive writing instruction.
- 3. Can they spell?** Believe it or not, there are advocates of “alternative spelling” who believe many among us don’t need to spell correctly. The solution: be certain members of your family are taught spelling.
- 4. Do your family members answer basic questions about American history (or the history of your country if you don’t live in the U.S.?)** There are children today who think Beethoven is a St. Bernard, Churchill is a bulldog, the Civil War was fought between the U.S. and a country in Europe, and “Titanic” was only a movie, not an ocean liner. The solution: expect your family members to learn more about history outside of school than in class.

5. Have your children and grandchildren been introduced to good music? They will likely encounter rock, rap, and pop everywhere, even in school. What about classical music, jazz, classic film scores, and the Great American Song Book? The solution: make a determined effort to see that they are introduced to real music at a young age, the earlier the better.

6. Do they appreciate art? Many people believe that “art can be anything,” but too often, in the words of Andy Warhol, “Art is what you can get away with.” The solution: share fine art with your family through museums and a host of online sources.

7. How many books have they read that haven’t been assigned to them? If they don’t read for pleasure, they may blissfully pursue a life of ignorance. Of equal importance is how and what they read. The solution: read and discuss books together.

8. Are they familiar with the rules of grammar? The ability to speak and write well is a key to career success as well as a cultural reward. The solution: insist that they be familiar with the basic principles of language, even those not taught in school.

9. Do they use high technology devices for good or ill? The Internet can be a marvelous resource or the most negative influence you can imagine. The solution: learn to take advantage of the best resources available and share them with your family?

10. Do you have a personal plan of action that can help your family?

If all of this seems intimidating or confusing, don’t wait another second.

Visit culturalconservation.org and learn what you can do to help your children and grandchildren discover that there’s more to life than celebrity gossip and pop culture.