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Spice it Up--Interesting Courses for Your Teen's Program

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Dear Friends,

It's time again to finalize next school year's plan for your teen. How time flies! If you had the opportunity to attend your state's homeschool convention and visit the vendor hall, you saw an exciting array of resources from which to choose. Or, as you researched course options on the internet, we're sure you found many neat ideas.

This month we are highlighting some electives which may not only spice up your plan, but also motivate your teens to enjoy learning. As we mentioned in the October 2008 newsletter, "electives are considered part of the academic course load that makes up your teen's high school program. They are evaluated and awarded credit and then included on a high school transcript. An elective is a course that is not required, but a course that your teen opts to take." In addition, these courses may augment one of the core courses (English, math, science, history, foreign language) in your program or teach a skill beneficial to your teen's future plans.

In light of the above definition, here are some interesting courses listed on our website. Maybe one or more of them will intrigue you and your student.

Social Studies

Some students enjoy history, especially the ancient variety. If that is the case, then an interactive course in archeology may introduce them to a possible career or further develop an existing hobby. [The Lukeion Project](#) provides courses (some of which are live from archeological sites and digs) where the student feels as if he is actually experiencing the discoveries being made. The Lukeion Project also leads family tours to ancient sites, so you may want to check out next year's vacation now!

Current Events

If current events interest your teen, you may want to develop an elective course that gives your teen time to read [World magazine](#) (be sure to take advantage of the subscription [discount offered to HSLDA members](#)). Add to this reading the helpful ideas, tips, and free weekly quiz offered by the [Student News Daily](#) website. (Student News Daily will resume weekly postings in the fall.) Student News Daily also provides background on news items and tips on analyzing news articles for bias.

American History

For American history electives check out the [Generation Joshua online courses](#) on topics such as the Federalist Papers or the Founding Documents. Although these courses are not to be considered as core academic courses, they are wonderful options that may be bundled together to create an educational elective providing your teen with the ability to study a narrow slice of history in depth.

Maybe stargazing is your family's pastime. If so, offering an astronomy course will provide credit for doing what your teen

enjoys. We list a [classical astronomy course](#) on our website in the individual subject curriculum section which was developed by a homeschool parent. It is advertised to provide you the opportunity to "follow the celestial bodies, and to find the bright visible planets in the night sky--all from your own backyard."

Business and Finance

Today there are a growing number of entrepreneurs among homeschoolers. For these students, taking a course in [business](#), or [accounting](#) while in high school will help them to better jumpstart their own businesses. Of course, they will also need knowledge of [finance](#) so adding an elective in this area will be beneficial.

Whether or not your son or daughter will begin a business, it's important in our economy to know how to live within one's means and how to become an educated investor. The Lord teaches us the necessity to use His resources wisely. So when considering how to use money appropriately, there are interesting and interactive courses available for homeschoolers. The [Stock Market Game @ Home](#) provides students with a virtual portfolio to learn the ins and outs of investing. An addendum to this course could be the [Motley Fool](#), the website's School of Investing as well as its other investment tips.

In addition, your teen can benefit from a personal financial management course such as [Dave Ramsey's Foundations in Personal Finance](#). This curriculum covers savings, investments, dangers of debt, consumer awareness and many other topics that build valuable life skills. We recommend that you purchase the bonus chapter which provides the biblical perspective of personal finances.

Economics

If your teen is thinking about majoring in [economics](#) then taking such a course during high school may confirm if this is truly the direction he or she wishes to go.

Computers

Computer literacy is necessary whether your teen goes to college, into the marketplace, the military, or remains in the home. Since many teens today type text messages using mainly their thumbs, a [keyboarding course](#) will be helpful to teach them to use a full-size keyboard more efficiently. Many computer applications can be [learned free through internet sites](#). However, if your teen wishes to pursue a career in computers, offering a more in-depth course during high school will allow him to begin acquiring skills to include on his resume. There are courses from [learning the basics](#), to [computer languages](#), to [programming](#).

Fine Arts

Homeschoolers have a growing opportunity to impact culture for good by using their God-given artistic talents. One area that is particularly receiving attention is the filmmaking industry. Does your teen hanker after learning how to take an idea, write a screenplay, and then film it? If so, [Vision Forum's filmmaking course](#) may provide such an outlet.

Industrial Arts

On the other hand, you may have a teen who really enjoys constructing or repairing items around the house. Learning skills in carpentry, woodworking, or repairing small engines will be put to use no matter what your child does as an adult. Having a handy husband (or wife) will be a blessing for a spouse some day! [Courses with step-by-step instructions](#) that you, the parent, can teach are available for homeschoolers. You may even surprise yourself in discovering a new area of interest.

Theology

Is God calling your child into full-time ministry? You can help your teen while in high school to prepare for Bible school or seminary by offering courses in public speaking, church history, or even Greek.

We trust that this sampling of courses will ignite a brainstorming session with your teen as you choose a course or two to spice up the new school year. Remember, though, to limit the number of electives in any one year so as not to interfere with completing the core courses well.

Since August is the month many families either begin their new school year or are feverishly preparing to do so, our next newsletter will provide you with information on a variety of tests that you may want to investigate for your teen including the PLAN, PSAT, SAT, SAT Subject Tests, ACT, Compass, and Explore tests.

In the meantime...

We're adding sunshine and cheer to our days,

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HSLDA High School Coordinators



This resource is an article from the *Homeschooling Thru Highschool* newsletter (7/9/2009), and is provided by the Home School Legal Defense Association as a service to the homeschooling community.

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