

Getting to Know Your TBG Notebook

The Truth Beauty Goodness Notebook is a special hardcover notebook, fold-sewn with hand-stamped gold lettering, for keeping narrations and other entries related to artist and composer study as well as hymns, folksongs, poetry, and Scripture. It is designed to fit with Mason's method of narration and is structured around notebook entries that follow the presentation of living ideas. Charlotte Mason writes in her 20 Principles, "As knowledge is not assimilated until it is reproduced, children should 'tell back' after a single reading or hearing: or should write on some part of what they have read." Drawn narrations (that follow oral) or written narrations constitute the act of "telling back."

The TBG Notebook is divided into three sections and is designed to hold several years of TBG entries. The notebook contains three ribbons so you can move through each section independently. It is important to begin each new entry with the date. A few minutes of time set aside on a regular basis is all that is needed to have a very nice TBG Notebook. Be sure to write your name in your book, maybe on the back cover or on the first endsheet. Also, don't miss our important note at the end about what kind of pens and pencils to use.

Grab your TBG Notebook so we can walk through the pages together...

The first two leaves which feel a little more stiff are the book's endsheets. They are part of its construction and make it very strong. You will find the same two pages at the end of the book. Although these pages should not be used for TBG entries there are many beautiful and interesting decorated endsheets in the world of books. You may be inspired to make use of these endsheets using examples you find in the books you encounter.

The first page of the book follows the endsheets. Here, you may like to write the title of your book such as "Lydia's TBG Notebook" with a start date. Page two has no planned use but lots of potential. Page three, which is now indicated with a page number, is the Table of Contents page. This optional Table of Contents page can be filled in as you go or left blank until a future date.

Artist Study

The first section of the notebook is reserved for Artist Study entries. This section begins on page four and ends on page 64. Generally families study three artists and about 18 works of art each year. If you dedicate one page to each work of art, plus a page or two for the life of each artist, that adds up to 60 pages or about three years of entries. Postcard-size prints, available on our website, can be mounted in the notebook leaving room for written or drawn narrations on the same page¹. If full-size prints are mounted the book will hold closer to two years of entries. There is no neat system of use for these pages. Some weeks you may use half a page, one page or even two. It is fine to follow one approach for a term and change the next. It is often good to begin with a general plan and modify as you go based on your experience and preference.

We think the simplest plan for Artist Study is to purchase several 8.5 x 11, full-size artist sets depending on how many people are using them at once. Usually 2-3 people can comfortably view one full-size print². One of these sets can be displayed in your school room and any others can be kept in a binder. Another way to keep a record of prints studied is to purchase the less expensive postcard-size set of prints to put in a photo album or mount in your notebook. Keeping artist prints separate leaves your TBG notebook open for lots of different

¹ We recommend using photo corners to mount the print along with a thin layer of glue or double-sided tape to hold the print steady.

² Postcard-size prints should not be used for Artist Study. They are too small to appreciate the details and overall composition.

entries. The pages in this section alternate between blank and lined for drawn and written narrations. The lines are intentionally light in case you prefer to draw over them or mount other drawings.

On page five you might like to write the title 'Artist Study'. On page seven you might add 'Monet'. When you begin a new artist, you can consider listing the artist's most famous works, some interesting things about his life, his birthdate and the day he died, and information about the historical movement, or 'school', he belonged to. You can also record important events in his life and the date of each painting using a century chart³ and mount this in your book. The century chart and introductory pages can be filled in throughout the term. The pages that follow will be used to make an entry for each work of art you study. This might include a drawn or written narration, or both. Parents can enter written narrations for younger children.

Composer Study

The Composer Study section begins on page 65 and ends on page 128, containing 64 pages. You might like to write the title Composer Study on page 65. Families study three composers and about 18 pieces each year. Each composer should have a dedicated page (see notes under Artist Study) followed by one page to write or draw a narration for each piece. You might like to construct a music staff in order to record favorite or notable excerpts of the pieces studied. This section alternates between dotted and blank pages and provides space for about three years of entries. Dotted pages can be used for written and drawn narrations, music staves, and many other things.

Music, Poetry, and Scripture

The final section is reserved for all remaining TBG subjects. It begins on page 129 and ends on the last page of the book. You might like to write a title for the section on page 129. Younger students can use this space for drawn narrations of hymns, folksongs, poetry, and Scripture. Older students might use it for drawn or written narrations and could construct a music staff in order to record excerpts of the musical pieces studied as recommended above. One idea is to hand copy a poem and illustrate the margins, often called a "broadside."⁴ Solfege entries could also be made in this section of the book. It is also a nice place to keep track of new recitations learned each term. Finally, your own musical arrangements, poems, and artwork would go well here. This section alternates between dotted and blank pages and provides space for about three years of entries. Dotted pages can be used for written and drawn narrations, music staves, organizing illustrations around lyrics and poetry, and many other things.

As G.M. Bernau tells us, "There is no need to be an artist in order to have quite an interesting book—neatness and accuracy are essential though." Notebooks should be neat and reflect some planning of the use of pages, but a quantity of good entries is preferred to only a few elaborate ones.

Entries should be done in brush-drawing, pencil, colored pencil, or fine-point archival pigment ink, which is waterproof and will not bleed through the paper. You should test any other pens and markers on page 192, the last page of the book. Brush-drawing is best done on separate art paper and mounted into the TBG notebook.

³ Visit www.riverbendpress.com/century-charts for a printable Century Chart.

⁴ Parents can help younger students by handwriting the poem or lyrics into the book for the child to illustrate or on a piece of paper for the child to copy from.