**Classical Historian Teacher Newsletter**

**Week 18**

Dear Teachers of the Classical Historian,

**Teaching and Classroom Management Tip 18**

Physical Environment of the Classroom:

While this newsletter is number 18, and in many ways it is “too late” to drastically change things in the classroom, I do want to discuss the idea of how the physical environment affects the educational process and atmosphere. It is actually never “too late” to change things, but, once the horse has started the race, it is hard to change its direction.

The physical environment of a classroom greatly affects learning. I prefer a room with many windows to allow in natural sunlight. It’s easier to teach when it is not too hot and not too cold. When setting up the chairs, if it is a small group and they can sit around a dining room table, then that is preferred. If the class size is too big, then you will need to sit students in chairs and desks. For instruction that is teacher-directed, face students in rows and columns facing the teacher. I strongly recommend this on the first day of class, as well. Students need to know that the teacher is in charge and is willing to take charge and bear responsibility for the class. Sitting students facing one direction towards the teacher gives this impression. If students will engage in a discussion, and if it is possible, sit students in a circle where everyone can see each other. When possible, seat students at tables that are large enough to seat two students per table. I like this because it gives students an immediate partner to share.

I’ve seen a few classrooms where students are seated in two groups facing each other. I’ve never noticed anything good coming from this arrangement. It gives students much temptation to look at their classmates, to talk about social topics, and to not pay attention.

One great advice I received when I had a student-teaching opportunity was to rearrange the desks before the students walked into the room. In this way, students who had been accustomed to their master teacher and his ways, would recognize the new seating arrangement and realize that their new teacher is “the boss.” This rearranging the desks differently from my master teacher helped me establish my own classroom atmosphere.

**Classical Historian Parent Newsletter**

Week Eighteen:

Last week the focus was time. This week, the focus is on environment.

Students should have an area in the house where they can place their study materials and have ample room to write on paper, to see their books, and to have this area primarily used for studying when studying. In my house, my children like to use the kitchen table for their studies. When they are studying, however, the table is cleared of food or dishes or other items.

Another consideration is noise level. This is tricky. I prefer silence if I am concentrating on schoolwork. However, my oldest always listened to music. He was an Honors student who greatly surpassed me in math and science. Another daughter needed complete silence and had to wear ear muffs that blocked out all sound. My advice is to start with quiet and hope that the student will do best. However, a parent has to be flexible with this.

**Junior High Ancient Civilizations**

**Student of the Week:**

**History**

Students discussed Greek literature and mythology. Students were introduced to Ancient Indian Culture and Society.

**History Skills Learned or Practiced in Class**

Students practiced the skill of taking a quiz and learning about the foundation of Western Civilization. Students had a Socratic discussion on Ancient Greece.

**Homework**

1. Study the Grammar for Week Eighteen for a five-question quiz.

2. Complete all work from the *World History Detective*, lesson 12. Ancient Indian Culture and Society.

**Junior High Medieval Civilizations**

**Student of the Week:**

**History**

Students took a quiz on Medieval Europe and learned about Medieval Russia and feudalism.

**History Skills Learned or Practiced in Class**

Students took a quiz based on what they learned and read out loud. Students practiced vocabulary words.

**Homework**

1. **Complete #10 and the Mind Map for lesson 39 and answer all questions from lesson 40. Feudalism in *World History Detective*.**
2. **Study the Grammar for Medieval Europe for next week’s five-question quiz.**

**Junior High American History *The Story of Liberty***

**Student of the Week:**

**History**

Students discussed the importance of George Washington and the Presidency of John Adams.

**History Skills Learned or Practiced in Class**

Students took a quiz on vocabulary and discussed the American Founding Fathers.

**Homework**

1. Read chapters 35 and 36 and answer all questions.

2. Study the grammar for lessons 31 – 36 for next week’s five-question quiz.

**High School American History**

**Student of the Week:**

**History**

Students discussed issues of the years 1850-1900 in America. They read about the early Women’s Rights’ Movement and about the Socialist movement in America.

**History Skills Learned or Practiced in Class**

Students had a Socratic discussion and wrote a reflection piece.

**Homework**

1. Read chapter 12 of *A Patriot’s History of the United States*.

2. Read the primary source documents above if you didn’t have time to read them in class.

3. Prepare for discussions of all open-ended questions for week 18.

4. Choose ten words to define from chapter 12.

**High School World History**

**Student of the Week:**

**History**

Students discussed the Age of Exploration and Commerce.

**History Skills Learned or Practiced in Class**

Students had a Socratic discussion. They practiced writing in history.

**Homework**

1. Read chapter 11. Answer the Focus Questions for chapter 11.
2. Complete the open-ended questions.

**Government and Economics**

**Student of the Week:**

**Academics**

After reviewing the homework, students read and learned about private property.

**History Skills Learned or Practiced in Class**

Students learned basic ideas about private property. They read an excerpt from Adam Smith’s writings.

**Homework**

1. Finish reading lessons five and six and answering the study questions.

2. Read Eamon Butler’s condensed Wealth of Nations, the Introduction. Summarize the introduction.