

## GREETING AND OPENING REMARKS

Our experience of helping homeschoolers feels a little bit like the story of Goldilocks. Some families try too hard to do too much, some try too little, and some get it just right. If you are so uptight that you alphabetize your homeschool catalogs, these evaluations probably aren't for you! If you are so laid back that your friends worry about you, these evaluations may provide some helpful feedback. And if you are somewhere in between, we hope you will pick and choose the evaluations that help you fulfill your goals for your family.

The product that you have purchased is, first and foremost, a *servant*. Please do not allow it to become a master to you or to your students. As you may know, especially if you've used *Tapestry* in previous years, we are firmly committed to the individuality of your family and to the primacy of the Holy Spirit's guidance in your homeschooling endeavor. To that end, we have created a curriculum that employs **guided choice** among a limited number of good options and even among options beyond the immediate resources we recommend. *Tapestry* is a buffet table, if you will, liberally spread with delightful and healthy foods meant to appeal to a variety of palates. No one family will (or should!) use all the educational options that *Tapestry* lists on any one level for any one student.

This is true for reading assignments and hands-on projects; it is just as true for evaluations. We have assembled here a **toolbox of evaluation strategies**, for reasons listed below. Week by week, you will need to choose the best tools for the job of educating your child and, in most cases, *leave some of our tools unused!*

If you have purchased *Tapestry*, you probably already agree with us that you must (and can!) make adjustments and choices in whatever published curriculum you buy, but you may not yet have made the same conclusion for the world of evaluations. The evaluations provided here are perhaps best suited to *Tapestry* users who feel insecure about their children's academic progress, need to provide objective grades to homeschool oversight organizations, or desire extra help with choosing dishes off the *Tapestry* smorgasbord.

The above are all good uses for *Evaluations*. We cannot repeat too often, however, that an overly frequent use of evaluations will not bless you or your students.

- Rightly used, evaluations can give you a good indication of your student's academic progress and provide useful feedback to your student. Overused, evaluations dictate the content of your week, intimidate or overburden students, and kill the love of learning.
- Evaluations that are printed by a curriculum publisher tend to be more widely accepted than teacher-generated tests.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, they should not be used as the only gauges of the growth and development of your child, academically or spiritually.
- Rightly used, our tests will give you *our idea* of the central information and themes of each week's work. Wrongly used, you will feel constrained to rely on our concept of the main ideas and not remain sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit, nor place enough emphasis on your individual (or family) gifts, talents, or interests.

## HOW TO USE EVALUATIONS 3

### Layout: Types of Tools

In *Evaluations 3*, you will find a series of files for you to print out as you have need. Here is our organizational strategy:

- You have already encountered our main interface page. Here you will find links to each week's evaluations tools, organized by week and by learning level.
- Note the color codes for the learning levels in the chart on the main interface page (corresponding to the level colors elsewhere in *Tapestry of Grace*). On each test and answer key, you will find these same colors that tell you at a glance what learning level the test has been designed for. As always, you choose your child's level each year or week.

<sup>1</sup> Note that with the advent of these tests, your record-keeping job just got easier. It is an accepted standard that one high school credit is awarded for the completion of three fourths of a printed textbook (or curriculum) and the grade figured by the student's performance on published tests. Using *Evaluations*, therefore, you can now dispense with the time consuming process of keeping records of hours spent on *Tapestry* subjects and take published tests instead. Remember, though, that even if these printed tests are your primary records, nothing says you need to use all of them. Please use them only as you feel they are needed.

- We have also created generalized forms that work with a wide variety of projects or presentations. In the interest of simplicity, these are posted once on our main interface page. You will have to use your own judgment in choosing the proper form—there are separate ones for projects, visual displays, writing, and oral presentations or speeches. For the most part, these generalized forms come in two types:
  - Spectrum** evaluation tools provide you, the teacher, with a flexible way of recording and gauging your student’s performance, whether on an oral quiz, a narration exercise, or some other project. They are especially well suited for evaluating younger students’ work, at ages when a simple letter grade would be more confusing than instructive. For each aspect that you are evaluating, you can gauge where the student’s work falls along a whole range from “failing” to “excellent” and mark the spectrum accordingly. Our spectrum forms also include space for comments to clarify your evaluation of his work even further. After filling in a separate spectrum for each aspect of his work, look for patterns in your marks to get a sense of his overall performance. (Did you mark his work as “fair” on most things? Was all of his work “good” except for one aspect that you thought was “poor”?) By using a spectrum, rather than traditional grades, you avoid prematurely assigning your student in strict categories (“Is it an A- or a B+?”), and you also create a detailed record of where he is excelling and where he still needs to improve.

- Rubrics** are designed to provide you with objective criteria by which to assign a letter grade to a student’s project or writing assignment. These are especially helpful for older students who need specific, detailed feedback and accountability, including a letter grade of some type. A typical rubric is designed as a chart with each row devoted to a different area for evaluation, while the columns are labeled “poor,” “fair,” “good,” and “excellent.” For each area that needs evaluating (such as spelling, in the “mechanics” row of a Writing Rubric), you choose which of the descriptions in the “poor” to “excellent” columns best fits your student’s work. For spelling, for instance, the “poor” column has the label “Spelling is well below ability,” while a “fair” job says, “Spelling is below ability,” a “good” job has spelling that is “acceptable, but slightly below ability,” and an “excellent” paper has “spelling done well.” Each row offers several such criteria, with corresponding descriptions in each column. After you have checked off the relevant descriptions for every aspect of your student’s paper or project, sit back and look at general trends in your assessment. In any given row, are most of his marks in the “good” category? Are all of his mechanics “excellent” except for spelling, which was “fair”? If the label for that row says that it is worth a total of 10 points and your student’s work is mostly “good” but not “excellent,” he would achieve about eight points out of a possible ten for writing mechanics. At the end, add up all the points to give him a letter grade based on 100 possible points. You thus come away not only with a letter grade, but also, like the spectrums, you have a detailed record of where your student needs to grow. (Note that we have created a “baseline” for the rubrics, so that if all of the marks fall in the “poor” column, the student would receive 58 points—or 60, with some rubrics. Each column takes into account this baseline, so if the majority of a paper’s marks fall under “good” you will give points as listed for the good column, usually 35 or 8 per row. You do not need to add the points from the preceding “poor” and “fair” columns.)

- In general, each evaluation tool has a student version, suitable for printing from your home computer, and a teacher’s answer key version, suitable either for your use or for your student’s self-correction. The one notable exception to this rule has to do with oral quizzes, which the teacher administers. With our oral quiz forms, the teacher prints out the quiz and has it in front of her while the student sits across from her and responds to her prompts according to what he remembers from a week’s lesson. The first page of an oral quiz includes topics or questions for you to ask your student; we also provide you with answering information on the same page, to give you some sense of how your student might be expected to answer. Subsequent pages supply you with customized spectrum forms on which to record your student’s performance.
  - Because of our desire to allow each family as much flexibility as possible in choosing resources and conducting discussions, our teacher’s answer keys merely provide

	Poor (10 points per row below)	Fair (10 points per row below)	Good (10 points per row below)	Excellent (10 points per row below)
<b>Structure</b>	1. The structure is unclear.	2. The structure is somewhat clear.	3. The structure is clear.	4. The structure is very clear.
<b>Content</b>	1. There is no content.	2. There is some content.	3. There is good content.	4. There is excellent content.
<b>Writing Style</b>	1. The writing style is poor.	2. The writing style is fair.	3. The writing style is good.	4. The writing style is excellent.
<b>Mechanics</b>	1. The mechanics are poor.	2. The mechanics are fair.	3. The mechanics are good.	4. The mechanics are excellent.

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*sample* answers. You will need to individualize your students' grades based on what you have chosen to require of them.

### General Weekly Procedure

Each week, we strongly recommend that you look over the week's array of evaluation tools for all the levels you are teaching **before** the week begins. (In fact, it's not a bad idea to browse all the levels, including those you are not teaching. At times, ideas used for lower or higher levels may suggest ideas to you for evaluating your child's work more appropriately than our suggestions for his learning level would.) Again, you may choose to use all or none of the tools we suggest in a given week.

As a guiding principle, we believe that any student who wants to achieve an "A" for a project or a week's learning should know how to do it before he begins his work. Therefore, especially in the case of hands-on projects or writing assignments, the student should know exactly what criteria will be used to judge his effort. For this reason, we recommend that you show your child any grading rubrics, spectrum sheets, etc, at the start of the week and carefully lead him through them if they are new to him. Encourage him to use these tools to self-correct before submitting his work to you for a "final" grade. If your grading tool is a quiz, be sure to cover all of the material on the quiz during the week's studies, or remove any questions you do not cover from the quiz before having your student take it.

For dialectic and rhetoric students, unit tests are cumulative. With the exception of the last week-plan of the unit in which quizzes are not assigned, no new ideas or themes are introduced that haven't been previously tested in weekly quizzes (though essay questions for rhetoric students will be new). For dialectic students, the short answer portion of the exam is adapted from previous quizzes and weekly Accountability and Thinking questions from the Student Activity Pages. For rhetoric students, short answer questions are culled directly from previous quizzes. While we don't recommend that students necessarily take quizzes every week, these quizzes do form a good basis for review for a unit (or final) exam.

Finally, remember that, for all learning levels, there are alternative approaches to evaluation beyond the scope of this packet, such as keeping portfolios, audio or video tape recordings of oral tests/quizzes, annotated photo albums, or home-school journals.

### NOTES ON LOWER GRAMMAR EVALUATIONS

*Tapestry* subjects are the "ice cream and cake" for students at this level, not the "meat and potatoes." A healthy diet for children who are not yet fluent readers will include far more time spent in learning phonics, concrete mathematical concepts, and handwriting than in mastering the stories of history or the works of great literature. Thus, children at the lower-grammar level don't really need any evaluations unless some oversight organization requires you to assign grades or unless you feel that giving the student evaluations will motivate him to do his best work. If you choose this approach, we provide in our *Evaluations 3* a combination of oral and written weekly quizzes for you to use with your child, as well as a lower grammar unit review guide.

Most young students have not developed fine motor skills or long attention spans. Many boys will have trouble sitting still, while young girls can often do more traditionally valued academic seatwork. For this reason, young boys are often discouraged by typical evaluation tools, which tend to focus on what is easily measured through traditional written tests. One of the benefits of *Tapestry* is that students can excel in things you might not find evaluated in other curricula, which commonly look only at written work the student produces.

Because we seek to recognize visual, auditory, and tactile approaches to subjects, we have created rubrics for hands-on projects (such as the "Project Rubric" and the "Project Spectrum" under our "Generic" category) which we encourage you to use in place of our given quizzes whenever you think that they would better assess your student's progress. Our general rubrics allow you to assess and value such things as perseverance, following directions, and attention to detail. In oral presentations ("Oral Presentation Spectrum" or "Speech/Oral Report Rubric"), we seek to reward diligence, clear speech, and poise before an audience as well as the factual content or how interesting the overall presentation was. Our general

rubric for visual representations (“Visual Display Rubric” or “Visual Display Spectrum”) gives credit for neatness, good color choices, and clarity of communication. Again, choose week by week to use one or none of these!

Remember, for children this age, entire numerical grades can be fashioned solely from evaluating hands-on projects, drawings, and oral presentations. Demonstrated effort, positive character qualities, and creativity may be just as important to recognize as the ability to parrot a correct factual answer.

## NOTES ON UPPER GRAMMAR EVALUATIONS

As students develop into fluent readers, evaluations become more and more motivational in that they provide objective measures of learning. Students may even begin to enjoy “proving themselves” by them. Additionally, your oversight organization may require you to keep grades for these older learners. Your oversight agent probably won’t dictate the content of your evaluations, however, so we recommend again that you use evaluations to underscore what’s most important to a developing learner: careful work, diligence, perseverance, creativity, following directions, etc. As with other students, you will need to choose the style and the frequency of evaluations for students at this level.

As with younger students, we have recognized visual, auditory, and tactile learning styles in our test offerings for this learning level. Again, there may be many weeks when you do not use any of our tools. We do suggest, though, that you begin to teach these students how to take tests that are most often used in traditional settings. In other words, though your child may be a strong tactile or auditory learner, at this stage, it’s important to begin to acquaint him or her with written test forms and the strategies for succeeding at them. The weekly quizzes and written unit tests provide good opportunities to practice this.

In the upper grammar unit review guide, we’ve provided specific ideas for reviewing with students in differing degrees of intensity. Should you choose to give students unit tests, we have provided ideas for you to review with your child; we also specify ways for you to begin to develop in your student habits of independent study for many different kinds of tests.

One last thing to consider at this level is the question, “Can my student write in a quick, clear, and legible hand?” Handwriting still matters! Even though most high school and college students type their papers these days, many moms are surprised to learn that most college exams are still handwritten. These are important years to develop fully (by daily practice and strict requirements for final work) legible and swift handwriting abilities.<sup>1</sup>

## NOTES ON DIALECTIC EVALUATIONS

The main idea behind *Tapestry* evaluation strategies for dialectic students is to answer this question: “Do they see the connections?” What we are pointedly *not* emphasizing is essay, or even prose, writing in our weekly quizzes or unit tests, though these do become an emphasis with rhetoric students. Rather, we have sought to create two different types of evaluations that should work together to give you, the teacher, a fairly full representation of your student’s achievement and to provide him with accountability for factual learning and practice in reviewing for larger tests.

For the most part, our weekly forms and strategies employ graphics-heavy representations of relationships, which the student is to use to express his understanding of the connections between facts or events. (We have sought to make these as visually interesting as possible, so much so that younger students may feel envious of their format. Do not be fooled by the illustrations. Real upper-level learning is being tested, but it is the connections between facts, not factual learning *per se*, that we are looking for.)

On unit tests, by contrast, we use more common elements of traditional testing: short answer, true-false, fill in the blanks, and multiple choice formats, along with elements from time line work and geography lessons. These more traditional tests should give students motivation first to learn and then to review such information. They will also give them an op-

<sup>1</sup> In case you are unaware, cursive handwriting was scientifically developed to be the fastest and most legible handwriting possible, while being the least fatiguing to the hand. We recommend remedial handwriting work for students who have not yet developed the ability to write a quick, clear, legible hand.

portunity to demonstrate mastery of the factual data at their level. See the student and teacher dialectic review guides for more detailed review strategies.

While we recommend that you continue to include project evaluations (tactile) or presentations (oral) in their overall grade using supplied rubrics, we also recommend that you make sure that dialectic students are increasingly comfortable demonstrating their knowledge of given subjects with pencil and paper in traditional testing formats.

## NOTES ON RHETORIC EVALUATIONS

Our goal for your child in the rhetoric years is worth restating here so that you understand the ideas that guided us as we wrote these evaluations. Succinctly stated, we believe high school students should learn to analyze the big picture and synthesize a well-informed, biblically-grounded worldview. The tests we offer were developed according to the following principles:

- Analysis and synthesis are key skills that these students must learn. We believe that a combination of copious reading of the classics of Western Civilization, mentor-led Socratic discussions, and much practice in the correct formation of written essays is the best means to this end. The quizzes we have written enable you to give weekly practice in timed essay test-taking. Again, your student does not need to take a weekly test simply because we have provided one. The sheer volume of tests should give you confidence to pick and choose between them.
- Fact retention is a crucial component of analysis and synthesis. Students who are new to argumentation can fall into “squishy” reasoning, stating bald opinions based on emotions or hearsay, not on facts. It is important that students develop opinions, but it is equally important that they seek to support such opinions with facts.
- All arguments start with the Great Fact: God’s revelation given in His divine Word. God’s Word must stand as the organizing paradigm that informs and measures all others; His is the Great Opinion of all time. Consider 2 Timothy 3:16-17: “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.” We want students to develop their worldviews in light of biblical truth, so they should seek both to analyze and to support arguments with facts that align with the Bible.
- An important goal for us in writing *Tapestry* has been to aid you in helping your child prepare for both college and life. By this, we mean we want to help you develop in your older child such academically related (but somewhat invisible) skills as managing time when carrying a full task load, developing strategies for studying for tests and memorizing facts, and practicing ways to learn material efficiently but thoroughly. Our Accountability Questions and Thinking Questions have this underlying goal, yet students often have perceived them as “busy work.” In writing these rhetoric-level evaluations, we sometimes draw from the questions we ask students in the Student Activity Pages. Thus, these Accountability and Thinking questions become more important to the student, since in mastering them the student is helped towards a good grade. A benefit to you as a teacher is that, if you read the quiz questions ahead, you can use our quizzes to guide you in what you should emphasize in your discussion times.
- For some families—especially those in which students are new to analytical thinking or do not have a strong base in writing—we recommend that for the first unit or two you use ONLY the short answer work. You can allow the student to answer the essay question orally, or you can use the essay questions and sample answers as teaching tools to help your student start thinking about how to take such tests and thereby catch him up. As always, you are the teacher. You know your student better than anyone; you alone know how much groundwork you have laid before the high school years and whether these quizzes will benefit or harm his academic progress and love for learning. (For more detailed information on our rhetoric evaluations, see the student and teacher rhetoric review guides.)

## CLOSING REMARKS

We hope the information we have presented in this introduction helps you to choose the evaluation tools that will best serve your educational goals. May God bless you and give you wisdom as you get on to the great and real business of assessing your individual student!

**CUMULATIVE ORAL QUIZ ON NAPOLEON**

The points and level of detail given below are those which a lower-grammar student might be expected to know from his reading in *Palace of Versailles*, by Linda Tagliaferro. You may also use these points to prompt your student.

1. What is the capital of France?  
*The capital of France is Paris.* [NOTE: An atlas may be helpful to show Paris, France to your student.]
2. Who was the Sun King?  
*Louis XIV was known as the Sun King.*
3. What did Louis XIV call his palace?  
*He called it the Palace of Versailles.*
4. Which queen did the people of France hate?  
*The people of France hated Marie Antoinette.*
5. What event forced the royal family out of the Palace of Versailles?  
*The French Revolution forced the royal family out.*

1. WHAT IS THE CAPITAL OF FRANCE?

FAILING POOR FAIR GOOD EXCELLENT

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

2. WHO WAS THE SUN KING?

FAILING POOR FAIR GOOD EXCELLENT

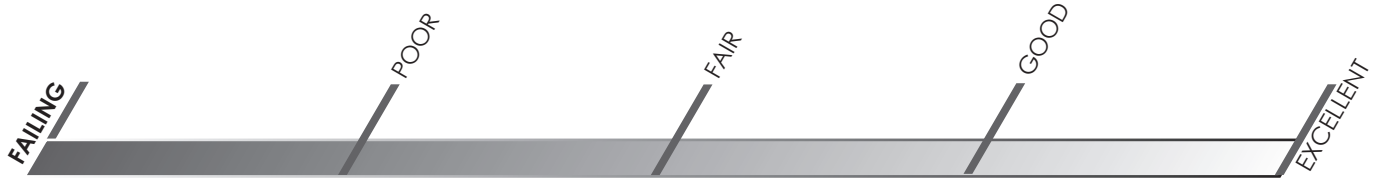
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3. WHAT DID LOUIS XIV CALL HIS PALACE?

FAILING POOR FAIR GOOD EXCELLENT

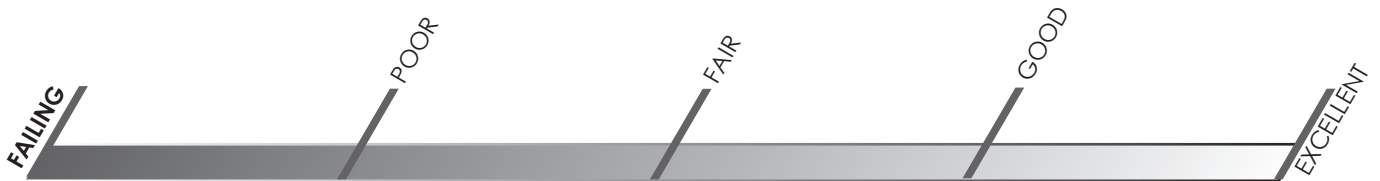
COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
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4. WHICH QUEEN DID THE PEOPLE OF FRANCE HATE?



COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
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5. WHAT EVENT FORCED THE ROYAL FAMILY OUT OF THE PALACE OF VERSAILLES?



COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Draw a line to match the term to its correct definition.

**TERM**

**DEFINITION**

