

Homeschooling 101

**Tips & tricks for parents who
need/want to become
teachers for the next weeks**

Who how where and what?



Disclaimer

The following instructions are for children until age 13/14.

Every child is different, please adjust to your child's needs in terms of speed, difficulty and general workflow.

Just try, fail early and laugh with your child 😊

How does Gudrun know?

Gudrun has been a university teacher (didactics) for many years and worked with future teachers. So she thought: Well, parents need to become teachers now, so let's explain to them how to get shit done.

Questions?

No matter how silly: call me or write me an e-mail. I try to answer every question (gudrun.toepfer@wechselwerk.com).



If your child normally does homework at school he/she probably doesn't have a place to work at home. So the first step would be creating a proper work space where your child can sit down. This can be...

1. An old desk full of rotten toys in the child's room (remove rotten toys first).
2. A cosy armchair/spot on the couch where your child can use an upturned tray as desk (yes, that's not ideal, but it works).
3. A spot on the dining table that should be empty for the time your child is working (you know, distractions...).

Separating the „work space“ from the rest can help your child separating those activities also in his mind. This is especially important when usual spare time activities are canceled (like playdates, sports groups etc.).
Helps preventing paranoia because of being at home the whole time ;-)

How long per day?



THIS INFORMATION IS BASED ON THE GERMAN SCHOOL SYSTEM – PLEASE ADJUST AS NEEDED.

Please don't make your child work the whole day as teaching hours are not equal to homeschooling hours. Reason: During school, a lot of time is consumed by „unproductive“ activities that don't apply to working at home, e. g.:

- School breaks
- Controlling homework/noting it
- Copying information from the board
- Laughing, whispering, shooting wet paper balls, picking them up reluctantly
- Waiting for everyone to SHUT UP
- Passing around learning papers, collecting them, organizing
- Waiting for everyone to SHUT UP AGAIN
- Repeating or explaining again differently because not every child has understood the topic yet

In about 3 hours (of 60 mins) your child can work A LOT if he/she's really concentrated. More workload is not realistic, except learning vocabulary (that's always a good idea). If you create a timetable you can help your child adjust to spending some time learning, some time enjoying spare time (e. g. working vom 0900-1030 and in the afternoon from 1400-1530).



People are motivated when things they do

- are nice, funny, agreeable or interesting (like watching Netflix) or
- bring them closer to a goal they care about (like annoying mom and dad until they allow watching Netflix).

Until age 13/14 it's just normal that children aren't very fond of spending the „free“ time at home working and learning. So if your child complains about it: Just accept it and be wise and forgiving with our little ones. Complain about it **to other parents** if you must 😊

My 2 cents: When my offspring revolts I'm telling the following: As long as you don't have green snot coming out of your ear, we work a little bit every day. Get over it.

My goal: Someday I want us to remember this time by saying „hey, did you remember when we had school at home? That was kinda cool...“



One of the crucial factors for successful learning is how new information connects to existing information. Since you might not fully know the current „learning status“ of your child, invest a little time in finding out. And here is how it's done:

Languages:

- Check the last few vocabulary chapters of the language learning book. Ask your child 10 random words. If 5 or more more of them are unknown to your child → write the whole chapter on the to-do list. To learn those vocabulary you can use an app, but a vocabulary box with small cards works just as well.
- Grammar: Pick a text and ask your child to translate. If you don't know the language yourself, let Google Translate help you ;-)
If your child just doesn't know single words, don't worry, just repeat the vocabulary. But if your child isn't able to make any sense out of the text → put the grammar of that chapter also on the to-do list.
- If you can't explain the grammar topic to your child, use a Youtube Tutorial.

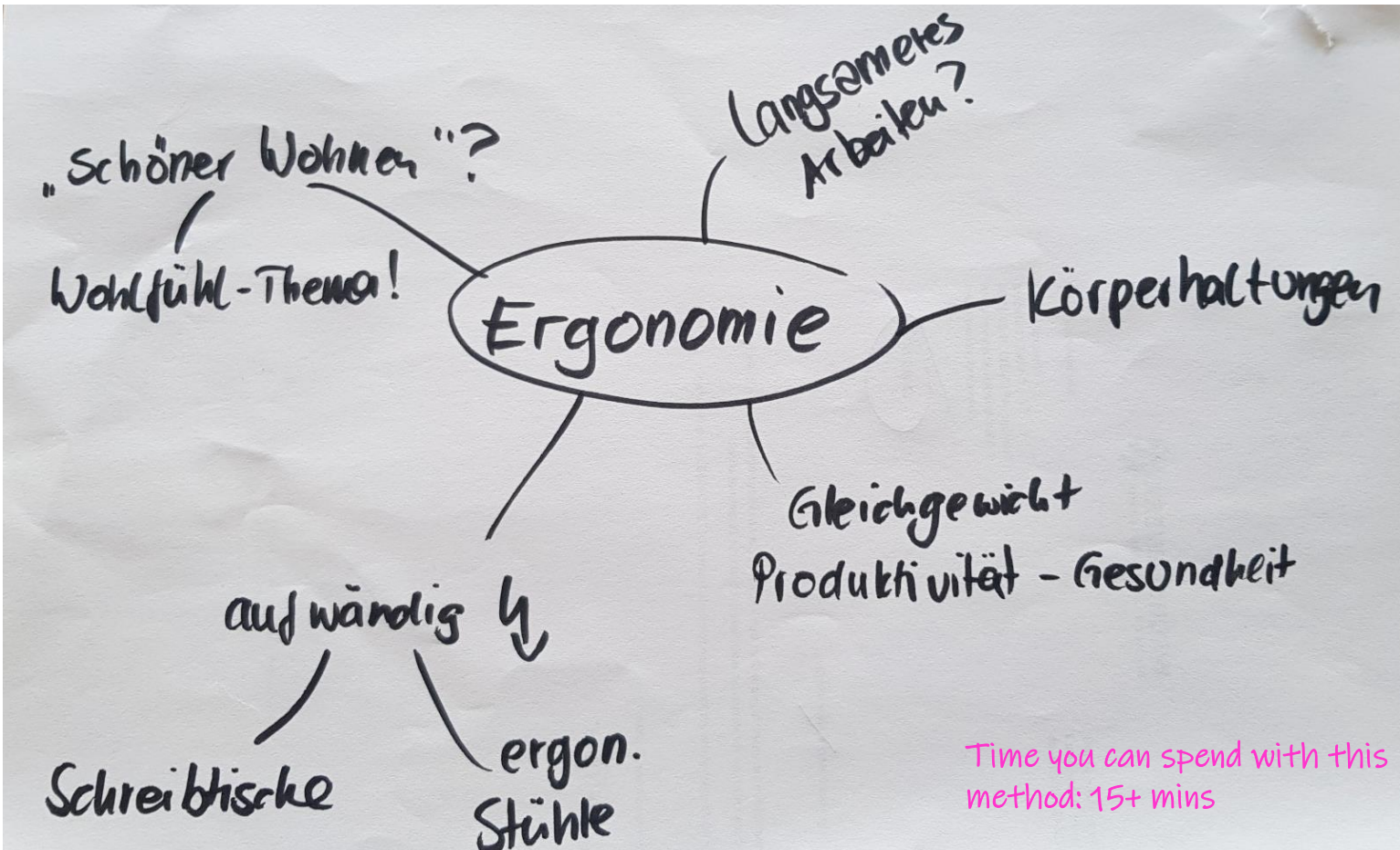
Sciences:

- Some books offer additional exercises in case the teachers need to fill some time or children need more repetition to master a specific topic. Ask your child to solve some of those tasks (the solution usually is printed in the back of the book).
- The same is true as for language learning: If you can't explain a specific topic, try YouTube. There's a ton of very good, very specific tutorials. Just type in the topic (e. g. maths pythagoras) and choose something your child likes.
- Check again if you child can solve the tasks now. If no → Repeat with a different tutorial.

Learning methods: Mind Map



This method is good for gaining an overview on a specific topic. Write down the main topic in a circle in the middle of a piece of paper. Let your child add/connect subtopics with a line. Ask your child to add as many topics as he/she can remember. Here's an example from my everyday work:



Tip:

You can also use this method to find out where your child has gaps in his/her knowledge. You know because your child omits important aspects – you can add and explain piece by piece.

If you're very motivated you can both draw a mind map at the same time and then compare your works of art. Explain why you added topics that your child omitted (and vice versa of course!).

Learning methods: Maps



This method is similar to the mind Mapping-Method. But now instead of only writing down the main topic and subtopics your child draws a real map and labels the elements. Every aspect is represented by buildings, streets, landscape elements like a dark forest (there are topics your child doesn't know very well). Here's our example for the French Revolution:



Tip:

You can use this method as a starting point, but also as conclusion or just a visualisation for the progress during the learning journey. Just start somewhere with your child and add what is new. Try to make it a piece of art 😊

Time you can spend with that method:
20+ min (depending on your and your child's
artistic level)

Learning methods: Headstand



This method works best for a topic that is well known to your child and (preferably) to you, too. If not check with the school book or use other resources (Wikipedia, Youtube tutorials) to prepare. Here is how it's done:

Make some statements in which you embed a false information. Ask your child to correct your statement and explain why you were wrong. Do it like this:

- **The 30 Years' War begun in 1555. True?**
- **The main element in the air we breathe is oxygen. True?**
- **Assonance is a linguistic effect where some words in a row start with the same letter. True?**

Tip 1:

Mean parents can make a statement that is completely correct. Watching the child struggle to find the mistake can be a nice moment.

Tip 2:

Bring a buzzer, a squeaky duck or a bicycle bell to the party and – TADAAAA! – you have a general knowledge quiz for the whole family.





Even if we currently need to protect our older generation... grandma/grandpa, uncle or aunt can serve as great didactic occasions. If a topic needs to be learned, the child can give some effort to dealing with the question:

How would you explain this to your grandma/grandpa?

Task for your child: Draw a picture that shows the most important aspects of the topic. An explanation of the picture must be given verbally, but it must not take longer than 5 minutes. The child can then search for material and use whatever suits the task. There are tons of good quality documentaries on YouTube / various video portals that simply explain EVERYTHING.

Background:

Just watching documentaries on Youtube does not necessarily mean that you can make use of all the information (because: where did years of watching “Who wants to be a Millionaire” take us?!). Somehow the knowledge has to “sink in”. When your child is able to draw a picture, give a small presentation and maybe really tell grandma on the phone/via WhatsApp, perfect! Then the knowledge is used several times and in different formats and is therefore better stored.

Learning methods: Title Page



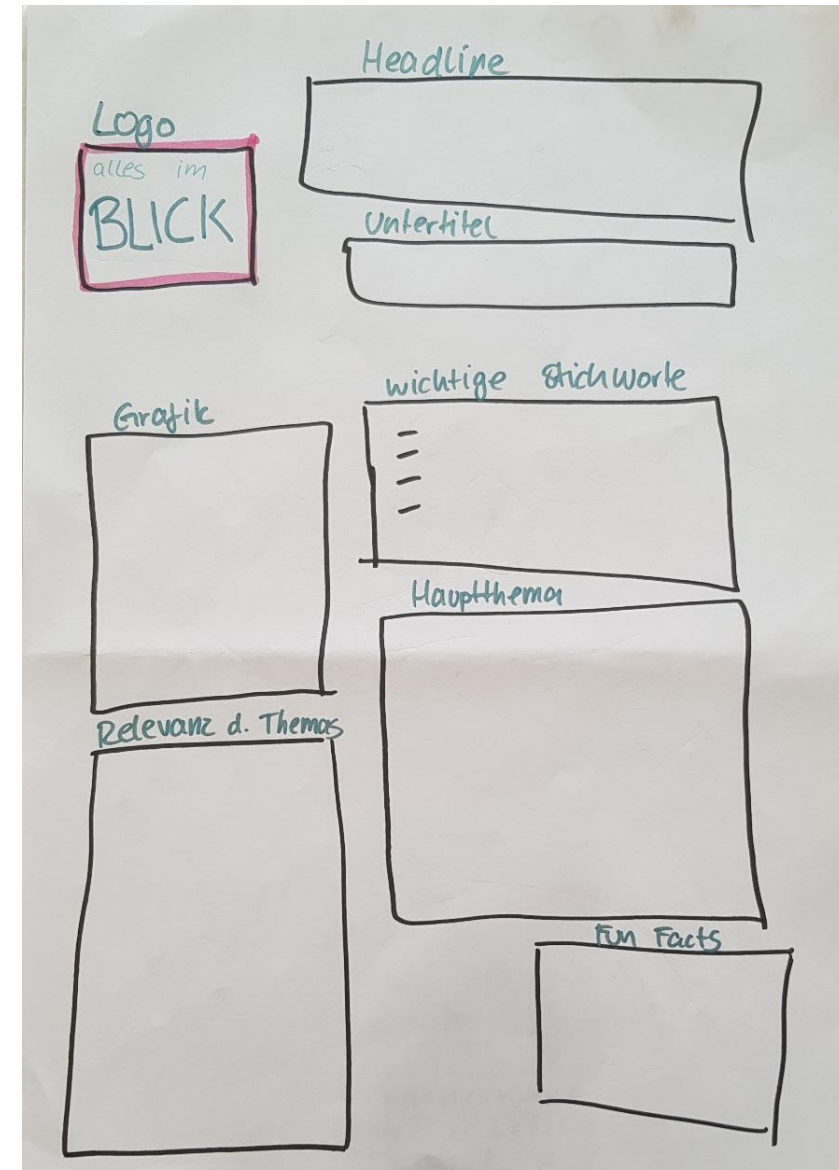
To summarize a topic, the method “title page” of a newspaper is also suitable. That's how it's done:

1. Draw boxes for headline, text boxes, drawings etc. on a sheet of paper. That can look like this →
2. Then the child is asked to fill the page with the help of all material available (booklets, books, worksheets, Youtube).
3. Proudly pinning it to the door is the last step 😊

Background:

The exercise with the title page is suitable for summarizing a topic because it leads the child to choose from a wide range of information (because there is only ONE box for heading and ONE for drawing). To decide what is relevant and what is not, you simply have to deal with the topic.

Time you can spend with this method: 15+ mins





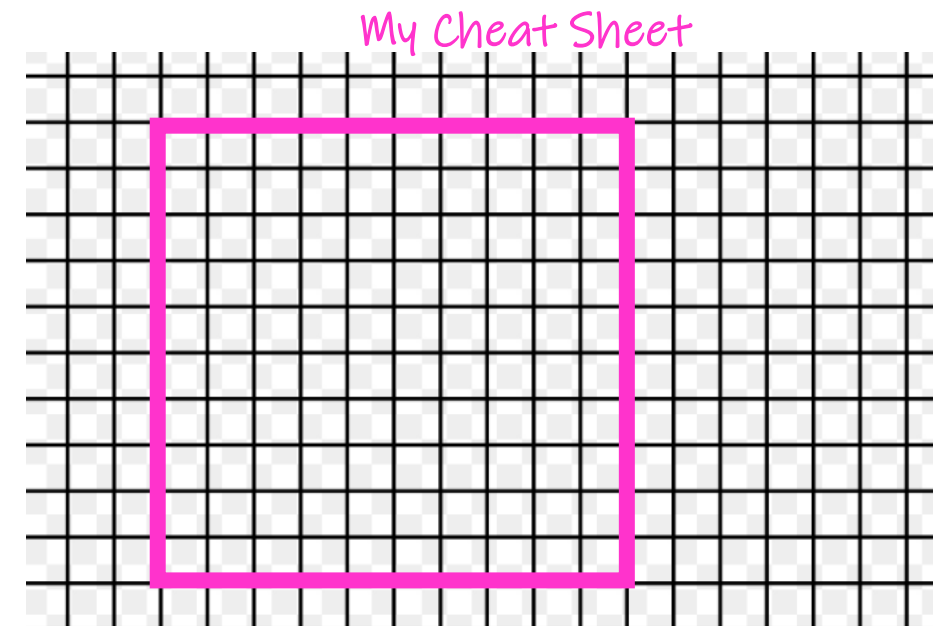
It's as simple as that: Imagine there was an exam in the post-corona era, e.g. in math about the binomial formulas.

1. The task is to create a cheat sheet for the given topic.
2. Rules of the game: It must fit in the palm of your hand, otherwise it is not a good cheat sheet. So that means a size of 5x5 cm (or 10x10 boxes).
3. When the child has proudly finished the cheat sheet, task 2 is to halve the size of the cheat sheet.

Background:

Similar to the title page, this method forces your child to choose the most important aspects and to abstract as much as possible.

In addition, kids up to grade 7 or 8 still like the idea of creating a cheat sheet. In fact, even the students at university still like that ;-)



Questions?



Call or e-mail me!

+ 49 - 1520 – 1983 091

Gudrun.toepfer@wechselwerk.com