



***Basic Information Packet  
for Portfolio Assembly  
2021-2022***

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## Table of Contents

Description	Page
Introduction	3
Annual Assessment Requirements	5
Your Portfolio in a Nutshell	7
Portfolio Pre-Registration Form	8
Assembly Instructions	9
Before You Begin	11
Creating a Meaningful Portfolio	14

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## Introduction

Maine homeschoolers are required to submit annual assessment results to the Maine Department of Education and their local superintendents. However, because the DOE and local superintendents share the information, HOME and HSLDA recommend sending the assessment results to your local superintendent along with a subsequent letter that states you are submitting it with the understanding that it will be shared with the Maine Department of Education.

For more background on this procedure, please visit our website: <https://www.homeschoolersofmaine.org/the-law/letters-of-intent/using-doe-forms/>.

Many homeschoolers (especially new homeschoolers) become concerned about the annual assessment required by the state. HOME has provided a convenient annual assessment option that is completely homeschool friendly and fulfills the state requirements. In addition, families who choose to participate will be financially supporting Homeschoolers of Maine.

HOME recommends a portfolio evaluation as a means of annual assessment for homeschooled children. Evaluations through HOME are a simple and easy solution for homeschooling families. HOME offers a review committee including a Maine certified teacher to conduct portfolio evaluations. **All teachers conducting HOME portfolio reviews are vetted, accepted and trained by HOME for this purpose.** (Maine certified teachers who are interested in serving in HOME's ministry for the purpose of conducting portfolio reviews may contact the HOME Office for more information.) The committee does not critique or make judgments concerning choices or methods of homeschooling.

The purpose of evaluations is to verify that work was accomplished, progress was made, and records were kept according to the state's requirements. Portfolio evaluations also provide an opportunity for experienced homeschoolers to help other homeschooling families who might be struggling in some way.

Upon completion of the evaluation, families will receive a letter written and signed by a Maine certified teacher. Keep in mind that the teacher's social security number is on file with the Department of Education. Though it is required, it will not be included on the letter. **A copy of this letter should then be sent to your local superintendent via certified mail, return receipt requested.** A copy of the letter should be made and kept for your files, as well.

### **To participate, please follow these steps:**

1) Fill out the enclosed Registration Form. Enclose a check with your form, made payable to HOME in the appropriate amount listed below. **Upon registration, you will receive our portfolio packet, which includes copies of all the forms you will need to assemble a portfolio.** Please also note that HOME now offers preassembled portfolios. With this resource, you will simply fill in the required information and insert work samples.

### **You can order a preassembled portfolio at this link:**

<https://www.homeschoolersofmaine.org/resources/shop-resources-now/pre-assembled-portfolios/>

Portfolio Costs:

\$49.00 if registered by **June 1** and mailed by **July 1**.

\$59.00 if registered or mailed after August 1.

Late fee for portfolios submitted after July 1 - \$10.00

HOME Lifetime Families receive one free portfolio review and a 20% discount on additional reviews.

HOME VIP Families receive one free portfolio review and a 15% discount on additional reviews.

HOME Founding Families receive a 10% discount on portfolio reviews.

HOME Defender of Families receive a 5% discount on portfolio reviews.

**If you'd rather register electronically**, you can fill out our online registration form at this link:

<https://www.homeschoolersofmaine.org/events/home-portfolio-evaluations/online-registration/>. Once you submit the online form, you will be redirected to PayPal where you can pay with your debit or credit card.

**Please consider supporting HOME further by rounding up when you submit your payment.**

2) Mail this form to: HOME, 337 Hatchet Mountain Rd., Hope, ME 04847 by **June 1**.

3) Mail or Deliver Portfolio to: HOME, 337 Hatchet Mountain Rd., Hope, ME 04847 by **July 1**. Please enclose a LARGE self-addressed stamped carton or envelope, if portfolio is to be returned by mail. Be certain that the portfolio fits into the carton or envelope with ease. Please enclose a late fee of \$10.00 with portfolios submitted after July 1.

Please mail your portfolio in a Priority Mail box (which allows for tracking), rather than by Certified Return Receipt. The latter option delays delivery if there is no one on site to sign for the package when it arrives. For return shipment, please include a second Priority Mail box that will allow for tracking. Be certain the portfolio fits into the carton with ease.

## Annual Assessment Requirements

### State of Maine Requirements:

1. Review and acceptance of progress by:
  - A) a Maine certified teacher, or
  - B) a homeschool support group that includes for this purpose a Maine certified teacher or administrator who has reviewed a portfolio of the student's work
2. Evidence of fulfilling the compulsory attendance law (175 days of educational instruction completed).
3. Evidence that the following subjects have been taught: English and language arts, math, science, social studies, physical education, health education, library skills, fine arts, and in at least one grade from grade 6 to 12, Maine Studies. At one grade level from grade 7 to 12, the student will demonstrate proficiency in the use of computers.

### Additional Homeschoolers of Maine Requirements for Portfolio Reviews:

Homeschoolers of Maine requires additional material, as this is the best way for teachers to be able to do the review without meeting directly with families.

1. Resource/text information by subject
2. Reading list by subject, as applicable
3. Field Trip list by subject, as applicable
4. Sample of journal pages
5. Transcript, as applicable

### Helpful Information to Include That Is NOT Required:

1. Parent comments on the **Subject Cover Page**.
2. **Goals and Objectives** form.
3. Photos of work that could not be described or included otherwise in the portfolio.
4. Questions or concerns the parent may have about the child's progress.
5. **Additional Educational Resources** form.
6. **Topics of Discussion Page**
7. List of **Online Courses or Courses Outside the Home**.
8. **IEPs, IFSPs, Physician Evaluations, Public School Report Cards, and/or Test Results** for your Special Needs or Gifted Child

**Test Results for Assessment Purposes:**

Standardized testing is a legal and acceptable method for annual assessment and is acceptable to HOME as an alternative to a portfolio review. Some homeschool families prefer standardized testing as a means for annual assessment, but most are not comfortable having those results kept on file with state and local public-school officials. It is not necessary for standardized test results to be filed with public school officials. Families may submit standardized test results to HOME for assessment purposes in lieu of submitting a portfolio of work. When families choose this method for review of progress through HOME, all the REQUIRED forms in the form section must be filled out and submitted to HOME along with test results. Follow all other portfolio assembly instructions, as well.

### **Your Portfolio in a Nutshell**

When preparing your portfolio for annual assessment, focus mainly on including evidence of the following few things:

- All the required subject areas set forth in your letter of intent
- 175 days of instruction (attendance chart)
- Demonstration of student progress with 2 work samples per quarter, per subject. Consider using weakest samples from the beginning of the year, improving samples from the middle of the year, and the best samples from the end of the year so that student progress is obvious. Additionally, if you use a standard curriculum with tests, consider giving the unit test before you begin the unit, and then again at the end for comparison.

For more information and specific details for setting up your curriculum, please read through the Portfolio Packet in its entirety.



### Portfolio Pre - Registration Form

Please return this form with your payment to HOME, 337 Hatchet Mountain Rd., Hope, ME 04847 by **June 1**. This will make it possible to have your letter available immediately following your portfolio review.

List all information and names as they were listed on your notice of intent or subsequent letter of intent. **PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY.**

Parents: Father's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mother's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Children (the names and grades of those whose work is to be reviewed):

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

Address: Street or Box Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Town and Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please check all applicable items on the list:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Please return \_\_\_\_\_ (number of portfolios to be returned) portfolios to address above. A large, self-addressed, stamped mail package will be included with my portfolio. (Portfolios and review letters will not be returned without a return mail package.)

\_\_\_\_\_ I will be dropping off my child(ren)'s portfolio at the **HOME Office** and picking it up when completed. (You will be notified when the evaluation has been completed. Any portfolio not picked up within 60 days of the completion of the review, will be discarded.)

**Options for Payment**

- \_\_\_\_\_ My payment of \$49 **per portfolio** is enclosed.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ I am registering after Aug. 1, my payment of \$59 **per portfolio** is enclosed.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ I am a VIP Family supporter and entitled to one free portfolio review  
 \_\_\_\_\_ I am a VIP Family supporter and reducing my payment by \$9.80 per additional portfolio  
 \_\_\_\_\_ I am a \_\_\_\_\_ (Defender of Family, or Founding Family supporter) and reducing my payment by \_\_\_\_\_ (\$2.45 or \$7.35) **per portfolio**

For information on discounts for HOME supporters, please visit the HOME website at:  
[www.homeschoolersofmaine.org/join/become-part-of-the-mission/](http://www.homeschoolersofmaine.org/join/become-part-of-the-mission/)

Mail to:  
**Homeschoolers of Maine**  
**337 Hatchet Mountain Rd.**  
**Hope, ME 04847**



### Portfolio Assembly Instructions

1. Purchase a large (3 inch) three-ring binder with pockets, subject dividers and plastic sleeves (you will need 50 - 75 plastic sleeves, if you include two work samples per sleeve) for each child.
2. Please print or type when filling out all portfolio forms.
3. Please use plastic, hole-punched sleeves for all work samples. No loose items (books, journals, tapes, etc.) should be included.
4. Please use dividers to separate each subject.
5. Use the **Subject Cover Page** in the portfolio packet for the beginning of each section. This form includes room to list resources used and for parents to write their evaluation of the child's progress. If the course was taken elsewhere (public school, adult ed., college class, etc.), please include all pertinent information on that course. Please also note if the student has any special needs or learning disabilities in the particular subject area.
6. Please include two samples of work (copies or actual work samples, not website links to samples) in each subject for each quarter. These may be copies of work done. \*
7. Place portfolio of work for each child in a binder. Portfolios not placed in large, three-ring binders will not be accepted. The **Student Information Sheet** should be placed under the clear cover or as the first page in the binder.
8. Make sure that **Attendance Charts** for each child are completed and included in their Portfolio, and placed immediately after their **Student Information Sheet**.
9. Please include a separate **Reading List** and **Field Trip Log** for each subject, as applicable.
10. Include four samples of your lesson planner or journal in the portfolio OR use the **Goals and Objectives** page to plan your direction and/or chart your progress.
11. If the binder does not have the clear plastic cover where the student information sheet can be inserted, please write the child's name and telephone number on the cover of the portfolio.
12. During the high school years, please include an up-to-date **Transcript** for review.
13. Complete the Portfolio Checklist on page 12 to ensure that all pieces have been included, and all steps completed before mailing Portfolio.
14. If you have a child who is gifted, please be sure to include a statement about the areas in which He/she is advanced and how many grade levels he/she has advanced in these areas.
15. Be sure to read the **Before You Begin** section.

**For your convenience, there are blank copies of all bold printed forms in our portfolio packet, which you will receive upon registration of a portfolio review. Make as many copies as needed for each child's individual portfolio. Forms required by HOME are marked **REQUIRED** in red at the top of the page. (Using similar forms from another record keeping system is permissible.)**

\*If the material submitted does not show progress, more material will be requested or a conference with the certified teacher will be requested.

### Before You Begin

- Be prepared! Purchase any supplies needed for the portfolio during the summer months (binders, plastic pages, paper, divider tabs, pens, markers, storage folders, etc.).
- Purchase an additional binder for record keeping. Copy pages to use for planning or journaling throughout the year from HOME's e-book. Using your additional binder, create a planner notebook for daily use; or purchase a ready-made planner that suits your needs.
- Make copies of the required and desired pages and forms that you have decided to use from HOME's e-book to record information. Keep them in your planner notebook for easy access, and update as often as necessary.
- Prepare your portfolio for use prior to the start of the new school year, so that you can add to it at regular intervals throughout the year. At the end of the year, your portfolio will be complete and ready to submit!
- List your overall goals and objectives at the beginning of each semester as way to prepare for the work ahead and gage progress. Be prepared to adjust goals and objectives! Keep these pages in your planner notebook.
- If you are making educational accommodations for a student with special or gifted needs, be sure to mention this in the Comment section on the Subject Cover Page. This will help the teacher to provide a more appropriate evaluation of work and progress.
- Use an organizing file such as an expanding file folder as a "working portfolio." Store work samples until ready to make final choices. Do not feel the need to save everything! Save only the best samples.
- Purchase an album for photo storage or store photos digitally. Always keep a camera handy to record special moments of success, projects, field trips, etc. Review photos monthly or quarterly and make final selections to include on HOME e-book photo pages. Add captions to your photo pages to describe the project, event, or activity.
- Begin to build and continue to maintain the final portfolio as the year progresses. Review work stored in the working portfolio monthly or quarterly. Choose samples of work that best reflect student mastery and add them to the portfolio.
- Near the end of the school year, begin to add all completed required pages and other desired forms to the final portfolio.

- Review and discuss the portfolio with the student and make any desired adjustments.
- Be sure to encourage the student to show the final product to friends and relatives. Students enjoy sharing their yearly accomplishments with others!
- Store your child's completed portfolio in a safe place after it is returned from HOME. You may need it in case of a move to another state, for obtaining course credit if your child re-enters public or private school at any point in his or her school career, and to keep handy documentation of college courses taken or special certificates received. In addition, as your child grows up, he or she will enjoy looking back on previous years of homeschooling by reviewing the portfolio. Some homeschooled students even save their portfolios into adulthood and enjoy sharing them with their own homeschooled children.
- Social Studies can cover a variety of subjects from Community Helpers in the primary grades to Government and Economics in high school. Courses your students may be interested in might include: history, geography, government, civics, economics, religion, philosophy, psychology, sociology, anthropology, criminology, ethics, or law.
- Documenting Physical Education is not as difficult as it might seem. Keep a chart that can be checked off when children participate in sports activities, classes such as swim or dance, or go for walks, hikes, or bike rides. Include pictures of the children in various activities as well. There are no hard and fast requirements on how much or when to do P.E.
- Fine Arts is easier to cover and document than you may think. Whether it's playing an instrument, taking a class, visiting an art museum, or going to a concert, there are many fine arts activities that naturally occur throughout your homeschooling journey. Document them with ticket stubs, photographs, programs from performances, etc. Some areas of interest for your student may include: concerts, art museums, music lessons, dance lessons, studying well known artists/musicians, film, sketching, painting, photography or theater.
- Library Skills involves children learning not only how to check out books from the local library but skills like alphabetizing, how books are categorized, where books are located, and different media sources available through the library. Instruction may be given by the local librarian or through various printed texts on the subject. Homeschoolers of Maine offers its own unique Library Skills Unit Study to guide parents in covering this requirement. Contact HOME for a copy.
- When utilizing computer based and online programs, be prepared to periodically print items for documentation in your portfolio. Print and save items such as the program syllabus, assignment pages and samples from online discussions. In addition, print and include any instructor or program evaluations or progress reports to show the student's progress.

- A transcript is a one-page academic record of the student's high school coursework. This important document may be requested by future employers, military enlistment officers, colleges and technical schools during the student's application and admissions process.

Parents are responsible for creating and maintaining transcripts. It is much easier to maintain a transcript year by year, than to attempt it all at the very end. The completed one-page transcript should reflect a compilation of the student's coursework for each year during high school.

Because homeschool transcripts are the responsibility of the family, they are more vulnerable to loss and destruction. Preservation measures are very important. For safekeeping, store our transcript both as a computer file and as a paper copy in a secure place with other important family documents. In addition, file a copy in a cloud storage system, such as Dropbox.

For more information on transcripts, visit: <http://www.hslda.org/highschool/academics.asp#transcripts>

<https://store.hslda.org/high-school-transcript-service-p262.aspx>

## Creating a Meaningful Portfolio

By Ellen Standift

In many states, creating a portfolio of your child's work is a legal requirement for homeschoolers. Doing so gives the state authorities the reassurance that your child is making sufficient academic progress, as well as provides a written record for your homeschool's program. But creating a portfolio with meaning and memories can add so much more to your family's homeschool journey. By creating one that is personalized and tailored to your child and your program, you will be creating a book that will be cherished for years to come. Additionally, a well organized, personalized portfolio will give its evaluators a better understanding of your child and your family. This way, your evaluation will be far more significant than one for a more generic or haphazard collection of your child's work.

Compiling your children's portfolios does not have to be difficult, but it can be time consuming. Here are some ways to stay on top of things, as well as ways to put your personal mark on these "end of year" collections:

- **Begin organized and stay organized.** Keep a file for every subject area for every child. You will find that just having a folder into which your children can place their work saves you hours of running around at the end of the year. Date all completed worksheets and place them in the appropriate file immediately. For books (like math consumables) you can date the appropriate worksheets and leave it in the book, tearing out examples when you put your portfolio together.
- **Document everything you can.** It's a great deal easier to document field trips, books read, and schedules as you are accomplishing them, then to try to reconstruct the year after it's complete. You can do this on the computer or simply keep a notebook into which you write all relevant events as they happen.
- **Write a weekly log.** Writing daily lesson plans in advance can be helpful, but for most of us, schedules can change as the week goes by. Doctor's appointments, unforeseen events, needing extra time to complete an assignment or simply moving ahead more quickly can all lead to those lessons changing on a daily basis. If you keep a weekly log for what did take place in your homeschool, you will be able to provide an accurate, written account of what was covered and any special classes your children were able to take.
- **Take a lot of pictures!** Not only do photos provide a visual aid in helping to envision your homeschool program, they also afford you the chance to record events as they happen. Pictures don't have to record only the "big" events. Doing a science experiment, curling up reading a book, playing a math game or reading a map are all day-to-day events that you will want to remember in pictures. There are many ways to document these pictures, the most popular of which is the hobby of scrapbooking. Scrapbooking materials and supplies are available from private

consultants and in hobby stores. You can decorate pages with journaling, explain what's happening in each photo and enhance them with your own creative flair.

- **Take photos of items too large to fit into the scrapbook.** For example, if your child has created a number of wonderful art projects or science experiments, make sure you not only photograph your child working on them, but take ones of the finished project, as well. So many of these special “treasures” are fragile and photographing them will preserve them forever. For prolific artists, you can also assemble an art “show” monthly and photograph the group of projects together.
- **When in doubt, keep it!** It's a good idea to keep all sketches, diagrams, spelling tests, maps, current event projects, reports, handwriting samples, book reports, creative writing examples, math worksheets, & tests, foreign language samples, ticket stubs to special events (such as museum trips, theater events, etc.) and map & timeline projects. You can always weed out later! But by saving them in an organized, methodical way, you will be able to pick and choose which samples you can best include.
- **Give yourself plenty of time to sort and compile your portfolio.** Don't wait until the last minute! I like to give myself some time every day for a few weeks to really create the picture of each of my children I wish to convey. Rushing will only stress you out and make you want to hurry through the process. Take the time to create organized groups for every required category and then pick the ‘best’ reflections for every quarter for every subject. Using a three-ring binder, I use standard section separators and create different sections for required forms given by the evaluators, book logs, field trip logs, weekly logs, calendar (attendance chart), writing samples (creative writing, as well as reports), handwriting sample (worksheets & tests), spelling (worksheets & tests), science logs, foreign language samples and photos.
- **Neatness does count!** To provide the clearest record, I take my scrapbook pages and take them to the local copy center and have them color copied. I also find that this presents a tidier, less bulky ‘feel’ to the pages in our portfolios. Additionally, this keeps our cherished family photos in the family album. Copy centers will reduce and/or resize your scrapbook pages if they don't fit into a standard 8”x11”. I also have color copies made of my children's writing samples so I don't have to tear out samples from their “final copy” books and journals. Copy centers will do this for you for a nominal fee but some copy centers will allow you to make the copies yourself. Standard Xerox does work but doesn't look as crisp or presentable. Scanning on a high quality scanner on your own home computer might be another viable option, but may not offer you the same resize opportunities as a copy center's professional touch.
- **Don't forget the basics.** Make sure your child's name, address, phone number, age, grade, and other relative information is right on the front of your portfolio. It makes

it far easier for evaluators to locate pertinent information first thing. For example, if you employ the Charlotte Mason, unit study or Classical methods, it helps your evaluator to have that information right away so that they can best read your portfolio with that in mind.

- **Have fun!** Remember to look at this as your opportunity to share your year with your child's evaluator. Express your passion for homeschooling and your child's special gifts on every page. The love that you convey for your child will clearly show on the pages of your portfolio!

In conclusion, remember that your child's portfolio is a memento that will record his homeschool journey. Ask yourself what meant the most to you this year and make sure all those events or projects are included. Look at this book as your own keepsake, as well as the message you hope to convey to your evaluators. Taking the extra time to make it special will make it a treasure for you, but it will also help to give the best window into your homeschool. Make sure that window is one you want everyone to see! In doing so, you will provide yourself with a record of a moment in time that will last a lifetime.

***Editor's Note:*** Start the year off right by planning for your end-or-the-year evaluation, today! Incorporate Ellen's great ideas as you build your portfolio throughout the year. How easy it will then be to send the portfolio to HOME for your review!