

Waldorf Essentials Grade Six Curriculum

Melisa & Erik Nielsen

Waldorf Essentials
Grade Six

Second Edition

By Melisa & Erik Nielsen

*To all the families I have worked with over the years that share my love of this part of history.
To my own family that puts up with me as I prattle on about Roman roads and ancient texts.
Thank you.*

In appreciation for all the wonderful people that came on this journey with us as we were writing these lessons. We feel especially blessed for the religious groups that opened their doors to us so we could help you experience the cultures and faiths that you will meet this year.

This curriculum comes with support material. Please visit our site to obtain it.

Numerous other titles are available at WaldorfEssentials.com.

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O noble Rome,
The circle and mistress.
Of all cities,
Most excellent
We give greetings
To you among all
To you we give blessings,
Salute through the year.
~Anonymous

And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.
~New Testament, Luke 11:9-10

“Out beyond ideas of wrong doing
and rightdoing there is a field.
I'll meet you there.

When the soul lies down in that grass
the world is too full to talk about.”
~Rumi

Dear Parent,

Thank you for purchasing our work and welcome to grade six. This is an amazing journey and one that I have so enjoyed taking with my own children. Waldorf is a large part of who we are as a family as well as what we value in education. We hold highly the ideals and structure that Steiner set forth so long ago, while still finding that sweet spot of uniqueness we have as a family.

As part of your purchase, we offer on our public Facebook group, Ask Melisa. Feel free to join and ask anything about this volume, implementation, etc. You should never worry about contacting us as we are here to help. Our job is to help you feel supported. We have worked to make our website user friendly and provide you with another great avenue of support. Please feel free to check out the wide variety of resources that will compliment your journey. In the Resources section of our site, you will find support for all of our grades curriculum with drawings, audios to help with planning and much more.

Remember, this is not a workbook approach to homeschooling. While it will be tempting as your child grows to switch to that approach, it is important to keep Steiner's foundations of living, artistic lessons in our heart and to remember that this journey will be as much for your refinement as it is for your child's education and growth.

Many blessings to you!

Melisa & Erik Nielsen
WaldorfEssentials.com

Table of Contents

Wait

Introduction

History of Waldorf schools and anthroposophy

Part One: Feeling

Chapter 1: Parent Care

Chapter 2: Ages and Stages: Your child at 12

Chapter 3: Rites of Passage, the Beauty of Becoming 12

Chapter 4: Setting the Mood

- Tales of an Islamic Homeschooler by Stacey Anitra Greaves-Favors
- Surfboards and Soybeans: Homeschooling a Multi-cultural Family by Angela Chenus

Chapter 5: The Basics of Waldorf

- Your Changing Rhythm
- Festivals for this Year, this Age
- The Changing Nature Table

Part Two: Thinking

Chapter 6: Grade Six Overview

- Who is Ready for Sixth Grade?
- Coming to Waldorf Late: What Should I Know?
- Movement
- Music
- Foreign Language
- Handwork
- Painting/Drawing/Modeling
- Language Arts, Grammar, & English
- History and Social Studies
- Math, Geometry and Form Drawing
- Science
- Planning the Blocks
- Schooling Several Children

Chapter 7: Grade Six Lesson Blocks

- Recommended Books and Resource List
- Year at a Glance
- Weekly/Daily Schedule
- Main Lessons in Detail

Part Three: Willing

Chapter 8: Handwork

Closing

Bibliography

<p>September Physics & Geography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 week of the physics of sound. • 3 weeks of geography, beginning with your country – brief history (a timeline of expansion) what does your country bring to the whole world? Trade and economics, etc. Then also one week on the geography of Canada/North America, Latin America, and South America. <p>Daily mathematics.</p>	<p>October History & Language Arts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 weeks of Rome and the Roman Empire including Roman history, Emperors, and Rome’s contributions. <p>Daily mathematics.</p>	<p>November Gardening, History & Language Arts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 week of autumn or spring gardening. • 3 weeks of the life of Christ and the founding of the Christian church. <p>Daily mathematics.</p>
<p>December Physics & Poetry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 week the physics of light & color. • 1 week introduction to poetry. <p>You could take the rest of this month off entirely or just focus on the festivals. Make this time rich with stories and songs, celebrate and enjoy your family!</p> <p>Daily mathematics.</p>	<p>January Geometry & Physics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 weeks of geometry. • 1 week of the physics of heat. <p>Daily mathematics.</p>	<p>February Language Arts & History</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 weeks of the life of Mohammad and the founding of Islam. • 1 week reviewing and surveying of some of the faiths and cultures you have covered so far. <p>Daily mathematics.</p>
<p>March Geology & Geography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 weeks of geology & geography. <p>Daily mathematics.</p>	<p>April History & Language Arts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 weeks of history in the Middle Ages. <p>Daily Mathematics.</p>	<p>May Physics & Horticulture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 week medieval innovations. • 1 week physics. • 2 weeks horticulture. <p>Daily mathematics.</p>

A detailed lesson plan follows this weekly breakdown.

September	
<p>Week 1 – Physics of Sound. This week you will begin your first mini physics block. You will explore silence and sound, how sound travels and more. You have the option for each day to flex their summarizing skills about each day’s experiment or to utilize the poetry pieces included for some writing practice. This year all their compositions should be their own work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 1 – Explore silence with some early morning nature observing. Write observations. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 2 – Focusing on the sounds of creation. Discuss the emotion behind words. Write observations. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 3 – Explore pitch & volume. Observing musical instruments and different sounds. Write observations. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 4 – Explore how sound travels. Write observations. <p>Take this time to also review grammar and punctuation from years previous. We will be adding more concepts in the coming weeks and months.</p> <p>Daily mathematics.</p>	<p>Week 2 –Social Studies and Geography. You will spend the first two weeks of this block exploring your own country, reviewing from last year and keeping a timeline, then the third week will be spent on the geography of Canada/North America, Latin America, and South America.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 5 – Review the geography of your homeland, if your child has gaps, then spend some time filling them in. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 6 – Start a timeline of your homeland. Who were the first settlers? When? <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 7 – Continue your time line. Discuss major events through your history. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 8 – Take a walk through some family history and how it relates to your homeland. <p>Keep in mind there will be much more in depth study of these subjects later. In grade seven and eight, there will be more on these topics as revolutions are covered. Think of this as a good, first layer.</p> <p>Free reading over the next two weeks could easily come from historical fiction of your homeland or even the journals of those that settled your land.</p> <p>Daily mathematics.</p>
<p>Week 3 – Social Studies and geography. This week we will turn to look at the contributions your country makes to the world.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 9 – The native population of your homeland. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 10 – Take a look at why the first settlers came to your country and perhaps why they stayed. Draw a map of your country. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 11 – Discuss the expansion of settlers in your country. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 12 – What is your country known for? <p>Daily mathematics.</p>	<p>Week 4 – Geography of Canada, Latin America, & South America. If you live in one of these areas, substitute with another area in North or South America.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 13 – Geography of Canada. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 14 – Geography of Latin America. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 15 – Geography of South America. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 16 – Geography review. Writing practice. <p>If you or anyone you know has traveled to these countries, see if they have any interesting stories to share or recipes you can make.</p> <p>Daily mathematics.</p>

Main Lessons in Detail

Lesson 1. Welcome back to school! We will begin this week with the concepts of sound and silence. We will journey not only into the world of sound but also inside yourself into the world of silence. Many faiths explore silence as a means of meditation or communing with Diety, is there something within your own family practice that supports this concept?

Today you will begin with a pre-dawn or dawn nature observation. This lesson is best if it is just you and your child, planning ahead is key. Your focus will be the sounds of early morning. Most children do not know the sounds of early morning; these sounds are much different than the sounds that we hear even late at night. Prepare your child in advance so you will not break the silence on your lesson day.

As you rise, try to do so in silence. As you quietly dress for your nature exploration, notice the sounds in your home at this time of the morning. From inside what do you hear? Can you hear the birds yet? Cars on the street? Be sure to have your lesson book handy and some drawing pencils and crayons. Go out and see if you can find silence. Is it possible? What sounds do you hear? Which ones are of nature and which ones are of man? Practice being entirely present – is this hard for you? For your child? If it is, you may want to work together and do this exercise more often. After you have observed for a while, take the time to draw and write about what you observed.

Have your child write their observations of the lesson.

Optional writing practice ideas for this lesson:

The Breeze at Dawn by Rumi

The breeze at dawn has secrets to tell you
Don't go back to sleep.
You must ask for what you really want
Don't go back to sleep.
People are going back and forth across the doorsill where the two worlds touch.
The door is round and open.
Don't go back to sleep.

“Silence lets the one behind your eyes talk.” ~ Rumi

I love pondering this bit from Dorothy Harrer's book *An English Manual*. I found it very much goes with the lessons of this week.

“Speaking, writing, reading, and thinking are powers which distinguish human beings from animals. Speaking to one another and understanding the speech of others—the sense for speech—is as much one of our senses as seeing or hearing. This sense for speech belongs only to the human being. No animal has it to the same degree.

Many creatures are silent and have no voice: the butterfly, ant, snail, worm, spider. Other creatures make sounds, but the sounds arise from their legs or wings: the bumblebee's wings, the cricket's legs; flies, mosquitoes, katydids. These insect sounds express no feeling, but go on and on in a monotonous way, always repeating themselves, no one sounding any different from any other. None of these creatures have warm, red blood. As soon as you listen to the sounds of animals which have warm, red blood, then you will hear that they have voices which express feeling. Yet these animal voices are capable of expressing only the immediate feeling of such an animal—hunger, pain, fear, or pleasure. An animal cannot separate its noises from its feelings. A cat cannot purr when it feels angry; it needs must growl. A dog cannot keep from howling if it feels pain or loneliness. A robin has a certain song in the springtime which is never heard in the fall. If you listen to animal sounds of all kinds, you will notice this more and more: the shrill cackle of a hen announcing that she has laid an egg; the bleating of a lamb who feels lonely; the hungry screaming of baby birds as the mother bird arrives with an insect or worm for them; the calling of a mother cat to her kittens when she feels that they are wandering too far afield.

The human being can express his feelings too. Before a baby learns to talk, his cries, his laughs, and his whimpers are expressions of how he feels. Mothers can even recognize which cry is one of anger, or of hunger, or of pain. As a human being grows up, however, he learns to talk and to understand speech and then he becomes able to explain why he feels happy or sad. He can even keep still and not say a word, no matter what he feels.

Can you imagine any animal being able to explain how to make something, to describe a beautiful landscape, to tell a story of adventure? An animal can do none of these things, but a human being can.”

Remember as you look over their writing today that you review grammar and writing concepts from last year. By this point they should be composing on their own and they should be capable of structuring their sentences appropriately. Use of punctuation and proper grammar should be expected.

Lesson 2. Today will focus on the sounds of creation.

The sounds of creation are primal, they are present in most faiths and they are central to humanity. As adults, we know the sounds of creation in love making, think for a moment about those secret, sacred sounds – now think forward nine months to the sounds of birthing, another “creation” – the culmination of all the planning, growing, all come together in one moment when a new life comes forth. Have you ever compared the sounds of love making to those of birthing? They are not all that different! Now of course you won't be sharing this with your child, this was more to get you thinking about the sacred sounds of creation! Many faiths believe that sound, specifically words can bring creation – we also know with modern quantum physics that what we speak always affects how we feel and our feelings then can become a creation.

Again, wake your child early. Today do some meditation together on silence. Ask your child to think about how sounds make them feel. After your meditation, explore with your child how

sound, in spoken words and music can provoke emotion. Take some time to listen to musical pieces of your choice – deliberately pick happy songs and sad ones, and ones that might pull out anger. Consider drawing or painting about the feelings that might arise from certain words or music. If your child sings or plays an instrument you could extend this experiment to pieces they either sing or play – how do they feel performing these types of music? Also, talk about healing words and fighting words.

Have your child write their observations of the lesson.

Optional writing practice ideas for this lesson:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” ~Gospel of John, Chapter 1, Verse 1

“And by the word of my power, have I created them, which is mine Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth.” ~Pearl of Great Price, Moses, Chapter 1, Verse 32

“Your beliefs become your thoughts. Your thoughts become your words. Your words become your actions. Your actions become your habits. Your habits become your values. Your values become your destiny.” ~ Gandhi

On a side note: Has your child read the Narnia book, The Magician’s Nephew? If not, it would be a great read during this short block and if your child has already read it, then pull it back out – in chapter nine, “The Founding of Narnia” Aslan, the great lion in the wonderful epic The Chronicles of Narnia sings a beautiful song and calls forth the creation of Narnia. The description in the book is a wonderful read and worth revisiting if you have already read it, and certainly worth reading if you haven’t!

Lesson 3. Today we will explore manufactured sounds via the foley arts and through various instruments, as well as pitch and volume.

Again, try to begin in silence, if you aren’t rising together, at least try a few moments of quiet before your lessons. After observing some silence together, use the sounds we have in the support material for this volume and see if you and your child can accurately play “name that sound” – some are intentionally easy, others should be harder, we included musical instruments as well as foley artistry that is used in movies, TV, and in stage productions. After your little game, move on to talk about pitch and volume a bit. Put together a simple experiment using wine glasses of different sizes. Begin by putting different amounts of water in them, then wet your finger and run it around the rim, can you hear the pitch change with the different amounts of water in each glass? Blowing on pop bottles with different amounts of liquid in them is also a good experiment in pitch. Perhaps my favorite use of sound in this way is with prayer bowls and chakra tuning bowls, the beauty is amazing. Each chakra in our body responds to a different note and it can be very relaxing (and healing to some) to listen to music that is perfectly in tune with those notes.

Take the time to really listen to the quality of the notes. If you are a musical family and have access to several instruments, listen to the same notes played on them – how do they sound? I love

to compare the tones of a wooden versus metal xylophone. What could you use from home to make a xylophone? Explore other options for making various instruments – a box guitar for instance explore how different the sounds could be with varying the sizes of the rubber bands. Pluck them individually and as a group – is it possible that the size of the “strings” has something to do with it?

Begin to consider exploring the frequency of sound. Why do things sound loud to some but not others? Why are there sounds that animals can hear and sense that we can not? For instance, the dog whistle? What’s that all about? The dog whistle is a great segway into tomorrow’s lesson about the way sound travels through waves and vibration. Dogs and cats hear at a different frequency than humans, although some humans claim to be able to hear a dog whistle – those with super acute hearing, most can not. The dog whistle was invented by Sir Francis Galton. He did experiments on what frequency humans could hear versus various animals. In his discoveries, he found that cats had the best hearing, followed by small to medium dogs, then larger dogs and then humans. Remember that frequency is not the same as volume, although in the same realm. Frequency has to do with the processing of audible sounds to the ear. If you have time, explore the site of Sir Francis Galton (galton.org) as he fathered many different concepts from his era (1822-1911). If you have access to a dog whistle take care in experimenting with it but see if you can get dogs and cats to respond.

Have your child write their observations of the lesson.

As a side note, I often think of the story of the Pied Piper when I think of sound – how is it that he could gather all the children? Only they could hear his pipe. You might tell this story as part of today’s lesson. There are many versions available both on the Internet and at the library.

Optional writing practice ideas for this lesson:

“Into the street the Piper stept,
Smiling first a little smile,
As if he knew what magic slept
In his quiet pipe the while
From street to street he piped, advancing,
And step for step they followed dancing.”
~*The Pied Piper of Hamelin* by Robert Browning

“Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.” ~ Psalms, Chapter 100, Verses 1-2

“The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land” The Song of Solomon, Chapter 2, Verse 12

Lyrics to a favorite song would also be appropriate writing for today’s lesson.

Lesson 4. Today we will explore how sound travels, both through objects and through the air.

First explore air travel, explore how far apart you need to be before you must raise your voice to speak to each other? Explore this indoors and out – why does your voice carry better inside? Inside the walls of your living room (or where ever you are working on this lesson) air is trapped, it is not free like it tends to be outside so the sound carries on the air inside the room. Outside this is not so easy, air can get away from you. You don't have to move far to realize that you will have to speak louder in order to be heard. Next try a garden hose. Turn off the water, straighten the hose and make it taught, a good long hose is best so you can get far away from each other. Now speak into the hose, again the trapped air in the hose will carry your voice, how well does it carry? Can you whisper to each other in the hose? It can also be fun to experiment with echo, is there are place in your town with a dome that you can experience this in? This can be created in some caves, caverns and valleys.

Another fun experiment is the old tin can one, this shows how the sound vibration carries along the string and how the cans being a solid can act as a base to catch the sound as it comes through. Try it with string of varying lengths, like the hose, make sure the string is taut.

Some children will quickly ask about the speed of sound, one fun way to explore the speed of sound is during your discussions of the weather. The next time there is a storm, count the seconds between the thunder and the lightening. It is said that the number of seconds can represent the distance from the storm. The closer together the thunder and lightening are, the closer the storm. There will be more depth in this subject in years to come.

How does sound travel through solids? Try doors of varying thicknesses or windows or even cardboard boxes.

Water is the last experiment of the day. This may be easiest done in a pool or in the bathtub. Explore how water distorts sound – can you clearly convey a message by speaking in the water? After you try this submerged, also try it with the shower on, does a little bit of water make a difference?

Make sure you are keeping track in their lesson book of your various experiments and what their outcomes are.

Writing practice ideas for this lesson:

Spring author anonymous

Sound the flute!
Now it's mute;
Birds delight
Day and night
Merrily, merrily to welcome in the year.

Nightingale
In the dale;
Lark in sky
Merrily, merrily to welcome in the year.

This block has so many more possibilities, you do not have to be done here. Try to explore sound as a regular part of your school days.

Note: As you move on to geography, especially with the first two weeks of this block, you will be focusing on your own homeland – and if not your homeland, the land that you currently reside. This will vary of course depending on where you live. Each country has different points of history that will be important to us, be sure to include over the next two weeks' things that are near and dear to you about where you live and what you want your child to remember. Keep in mind that this is not an in-depth study, but a general look at your country, how people expanded or settled there and what your country contributes to the whole – the world at large.

Roy Wilkinson puts this well in his book *The Curriculum of the Rudolf Steiner School*.

“The sense of time is also important for children. They are taking part in certain events: their parents experienced others, and their grandparents yet others. In a hundred years, there are three generations, so seven generations would take us back to George Washington, fifteen to Columbus, and sixty to the time Christ. Our ancestors experienced these events. If children can establish a personal relationship with historical figures and happenings, history is of interest and of some educational value.”

Lesson 5. Take today to begin a review of your country's geography. This study began with grade five and it will be expanded here. How much do they remember? Have a good refresher day. If you are from the United States of America, your child should have a good knowledge of the states and where they are. They should have a good understanding of their state versus the country. Make it fun. I like to have a map of our country and see how fast they can remember where the states were.

Lesson 6. Begin making a timeline together. When considering the size, think about the history of your country, how far back do you have recorded history? For instance, with the United States, I could begin with the arrival of the Mayflower or I could begin with the signing of the Declaration of Independence, or I could go all the way back to the first known settlers here, which were thought by some to be the Vikings. To prepare for this lesson, I might look at some documentaries. I might even find some fun ones I would consider showing my child. These are just some ideas.

Discuss the first settlers, when it was and why they chose your land. Be sure to have your child do some writing about your findings.

Lesson 7. Continue your timeline. Discuss major events through your country's history. Don't forget to include some of your personal favorite or just very memorable – be sure to ask your

partner and perhaps grandparents too. My mom would say that it was the day Kennedy was shot. She can tell you exactly what she was doing, what she was wearing and how she felt. She was nine-years old. For me, one very memorable event was the day the space shuttle exploded. I was thirteen. I was in social studies class, watching the launch with my classmates. I remember the confusion as we watched it happen. What things do you remember? These things are very appropriate to share with your child. They are beginning to look at the world with a more critical eye, these as they connect with our generational history, these stories will shape them.

Consider having them write today about their own memorable experiences. Good or bad.

Lesson 8. There are many fun ways to learn about our homeland, some of my favorite are through our own geneology. Today you will dig into your family history as well as your family's time in your homeland. Did anyone in your family keep a journal? Family ancestral journals are an amazing way to learn about your homeland. Take the time to ask extended family about stories of your homeland. Be sure to have your child write down as many things on your time line as possible. What would you write in a family journal about your homeland? What would your child write?

Lesson 9. Begin the week discussing native people to your land. In grade four you discussed native tribes to your immediate area, now you will expand and talk about your country. What do you know about these native people? Are you a descendant of these people? Take the time to study the native culture of your country and then have your child write a bit about what you learned.

Lesson 10. Today, take a deeper look at why the first settlers not only came to your country, but what made them stay. Who were they? Where did they come from? Did they come in peace? Were they running from something? Were they conquerors? How about famous people in your country's history? Or maybe not so famous ones that should be famous? Take some time and freehand draw a map of your country, take your time, this map will be used for the rest of the week's lessons.