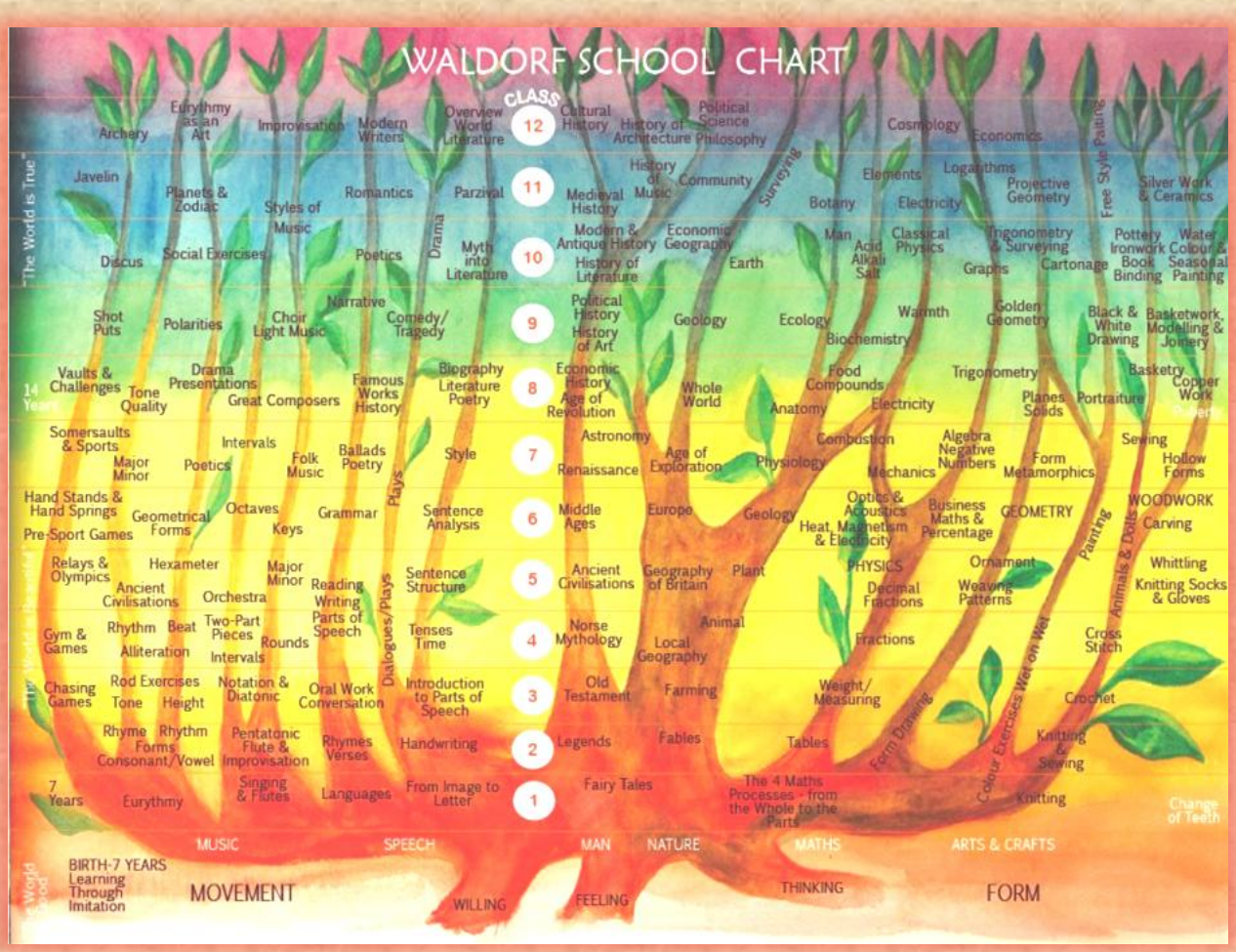
Growing the First Curriculum

By Dr Robert Rose



From Steiner, R (1919): "Discussions with Teachers", Natural History: Human, Animal, Plant and Mineral

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First Grade:

Natural History: In addition to this we must add something that can stimulate the children's thinking when we tell them about things that are close at hand, things that will later appear in a more structured form in geography and science. We explain such things and introduce them to the children's understanding by relating them to things that are already familiar—to familiar animals, plants, and soil formations, or to local mountains, creeks, or meadows. Schools call this "local history," but the purpose is to bring about a certain awakening in the children with regard to their surroundings; a soul awakening, so that they learn to really connect with their surroundings.

Second Grade

Natural History: With regard to [Nature] descriptions, to thoughtfully describing their surroundings, we continue with what the children began in the first grade.

Third Grade

Home Environment & Natural History: Even as early as the third grade we can extend what we say about the meadows and woods and so on to business relationships, so that later on the subject matter is already available for composing simple business letters.

Well, you have seen how we make free use of familiar things from the immediate surroundings for our independent instruction in general knowledge. In the third grade, when the children are going on nine, it is quite possible for this instruction to provide them with an idea of how mortar is mixed, for instance—I can only choose a few examples—and how it is used in building houses. They can also have an idea of how manuring and tilling are done, and of what rye and wheat look like. To put it briefly, in a very free way we allow the children to delve into the elements of their immediate surroundings that they are capable of understanding.

It should be very clear that when the children are going on nine—that is, in the third grade—they should begin to study an appropriate selection of animals, which we must always relate to the human being, as in the example I presented to you. This should be continued in the fourth grade, so that during the third and fourth grades we consider the animal kingdom scientifically in its relationship to the human being. We also begin the study of botany as I described it in the theoretical portion of our seminar.

Fourth Grade

Natural History & Geography: In the fourth grade we make the transition from this type of instruction to speaking about what belongs to recent history, still in a very free way. For example, we can tell the children how it happened that grapes came to be cultivated locally (if in fact that is the case), or how orchards were introduced or how one or the other industry appeared, and other

similar things. Then, too, we draw on the geography of the local region, beginning with what is most readily available, as I have already described.

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Fifth Grade

Natural Science:

In the fifth grade, we begin to add less familiar animals. We also begin the study of botany as I described it in the theoretical portion of our seminar.

Sixth Grade

Nature Studies

In the **sixth grade**, we continue with botany and begin the study of minerals, which should definitely be done in conjunction with geography.

Seventh Grade

Nature Studies

In the **seventh grade** we return to the human being and attempt to teach what I pointed to yesterday with regard to what people need to learn about health and nutrition. We also attempt to apply the concepts the children have acquired in the fields of physics and chemistry to developing a comprehensive view of some specific commercial or industrial processes. All this should be developed out of science, in connection with what we are teaching in physics, chemistry, and geography.

Eighth Grade

Nature Studies

In the **eighth grade** you will have to construct the human being by showing what is built in from the outside—the mechanics of the bones and muscles, the inner structure of the eye, and so on. Once again, you present a comprehensive picture of industrial and commercial relationships as they relate to physics, chemistry, and geography. If you build up your science lessons as we have just described, you will be able to make them incredibly lively and use them to awaken the children's interest in everything present in the world and in the human being.

	Sub-Phase 1		Sub-Phase 3			Sub-Phase 3		
Summary	**Class 1** **6-7 yrs**	**Class 2** **7-8 yrs**	**Class 3** **8-9 yrs**	**Class 4** **9-10 yrs**	**Class 5** **10-11 yrs**	**Class 6** **11-12 yrs**	**Class 7** **12-13 yrs**	**Class 8** **12-14 yrs**
Curriculum Content	Awakening to the local environment: plants, animals, meadows, mountains, etc	Continuation of class 1.	Study of meadows & fields. Extension of natural history to business. Building Farming Animals in connection with the human being. Introducing Botany.	Recent Natural History and business. Human & animal study continuation.	Less familiar animals. Scientific study of botany.	Continuing botany. Mineralogy in connection with geography.	Human beings in relation to health and nutrition. Further geography and industry connection.	The human being: bones, muscles, etc. The inner structure of the senses, such as the eye.