

Organizing Your Personal and School Library by Vicki S. Norris

If you are having trouble getting your personal or school library organized, try these suggestions.

Items you will need:

- * Bookcases - The number of books you have will determine the number of bookcases you need.
- * Colored dot or square stickers

1. Separate your books into the following categories:

- * Children's books (anything "below" chapter books)
- * Fiction
- * Non-fiction
- * Biographies
- * Autobiographies
- * Bible (commentaries, Bible atlases, Bible curriculum, etc.)
- * English (grammar, literature [some I differentiate from fiction - like Shakespeare - or other classics], poetry, anthologies, etc.)
- * History
- * Geography (atlases, etc.)
- * Science
- * General References (dictionaries, thesauruses, etc.)
- * Homeschooling References

2. Place all children's books on a low shelf or in a basket (easily accessible for small children) and in no particular order.

3. Place the fiction and non-fiction books (separately - on separate bookcases if possible) on the shelves in alphabetical order by author's last name.

4. Place the biographies and autobiographies (separately) on the shelves in alphabetical order by the person's/subject's last name (not the author).

5. Place the remainder of the books on the shelves grouped by subject, not necessarily in any particular order, just so each subject is together.

Now, this is the key! On all books, except the children's books, fiction and non-fiction, place a system of colored stickers. Here is the system I use and it has worked well over the years. Feel free to modify

it to work for you. I chose not to put stickers on the children's books, fiction and non-fiction simply because these were the books we had the most of.

6. After you have all the books separated, on the spine of each book, at the bottom, color code the books like this.

Bible - yellow

English - orange

History - red

Geography - blue

Science - green

General References - black

Homeschooling References - purple

Biographies - Black dot at the bottom with a blue dot above it

Autobiographies - Black dot at the bottom with a green dot above it

7. After all the books are color-coded, take a piece of clear tape and tape over the dot going from the front of the book to the back of the book to hold it in place. Voila! You're done.

You (and your children) can then tell at a glance where each color-coded book goes because all the dots with the same color should be together. If one book is on the wrong shelf, it will be immediately obvious. As long as the books make it back to the correct section, be thankful! As for the fiction and non-fiction, if your children are not old enough to alphabetize by author's last name, you will need to do this yourself. Designate a box or basket for them to put books in that need to be re-shelved. If your children are at an age where they can do this, then require that they do it EVERY time a book needs to be returned.

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