

How Does the *Life of Fred* Curriculum work?

Life of Fred is likely to be one of the most unique math programs you will ever come across. It is a complete (not a supplemental!), math program that relies upon the self-teaching learning style many homeschoolers love.

The texts follow the life of Fred Gauss—a six-year-old math professor at Kittens University who was born on the slopes of the Siberian Mountains—who has many humorous, unlikely, and zany adventures. Fred is designed to be particularly helpful for students who struggle with the relevance of math as Fred sees math EVERYWHERE. Witty and entertaining, these books will engage students in a way unlike any other math program—while also instilling a solid understanding of the principles of mathematics without an abundance of repetitive drills.

The program is structured in different courses that cover multiple grades: elementary and intermediate books for 1st-5th grade, a “Before High School Mathematics” series that features arithmetic & pre-algebra books for late elementary and middle school, a high school course, and finally a set of university-level textbooks.

Unlike the common “consumable” math worktext model, *Life of Fred* texts are hardcover, non-consumable textbooks with Smyth-sewn bindings; students write their answers on separate paper. Answers are also included in the text (written directly to the student!) for most books; geometry and the college-level courses have selected answers in the texts with answer keys (sold-separately) that include the remaining answers.

Elementary & Intermediate (Grades 1-5)

The **elementary** series of books includes the titles: *Apples, Butterflies, Cats, Dogs, Edgewood, Farming, Goldfish, Honey, Ice Cream, and Jelly Beans*. They are designed to be used with students in 1st through 4th grade.

Students are ready to start with *Apples* if they can count, add, and subtract to 10; it’s recommended that all students who are new to *Life of Fred* (up through the 4th grade) should start with *Apples*.

The **intermediate** course includes the texts: *Kidneys, Liver, and Mineshaft*. These books are specifically designed for students who are not yet in the fifth grade, but who have finished the elementary series.

Each text contains 19 chapters that are approximately six pages each and end with a “Your Turn to Play” segment with three or four questions. Answers are provided on the next page for students to review after attempting to solve the problems. Texts are designed to take approximately one month to complete.

Getting Ready for High School Arithmetic & Pre-Algebra (Late Elementary & Middle School)

The next course of books to follow the Elementary & Intermediate series includes five books: *Fractions* and *Decimals & Percents* come first as the “Arithmetic” books, and are followed by *Elementary Physics*, *Pre-Algebra 1 with Biology*, and *Pre-Algebra 2 with Economics* as the “Pre-Algebra” books.

Designed for students in grades 5-8 who already know their addition, subtraction, and multiplication tables, as well as how to perform long division, these fun books also begin to integrate science concepts (usually taught in high school or college!) at an appropriate late elementary / middle-school level.

Engagement with the material is encouraged through “Your Turn to Play” segments that give students a small number of thought-provoking questions to think through with answers provided on the next page. “The Bridge” review questions are given after a number of chapters, and provide transitions between concepts as well as a means of assessment. For parents who choose to use these sections as evaluation tools, it is recommended that students score at least 90% before progressing; if students don’t succeed, they can try again with a total of five different sets of problems. The book concludes with “The Final Bridge.” Answers to “bridge” questions are provided in the back of the books.

High School Mathematics

The high school courses include: *Beginning Algebra*, *Advanced Algebra*, *Geometry*, and *Trigonometry*. The latest *Beginning Algebra*, *Advanced Algebra*, and *Trigonometry* are now called the “Expanded Edition.” (These expanded editions of Algebra replace both the earlier *Life of Fred Beginning & Advanced Algebra* and *Fred’s Home Companion Beginning & Advanced Algebra* books). These expanded editions also have all problems completely worked out. The *Zillions of Practice Problems for Beginning Algebra* and *Zillions of Practice Problems for Advanced Algebra* books are optional resources for students who want more practice opportunities. They are keyed directly to the chapters and topics of the expanded edition texts and feature each problem completely worked out. Geometry still requires the sold-separately answer key in order to have answers for all problems.

The high school texts feature three to six “Cities” problem sets at the end of each chapter, which provide opportunities for review and self-testing. Additional practice is integrated throughout each chapter with the “Your Turn to Play” sections and answers.

University Mathematics

Finally, the university courses include *Calculus* (covering both freshman and sophomore years), *Statistics* (one year), and *Linear Algebra* (usually taken junior year post-calculus). All books include selected solutions only; for all solutions, the sold-separately answer key is required.