

Great Lessons Audit Worksheet

Evaluating your current presentations for scientific accuracy and justice-centered practice

The five Great Lessons — the Story of the Universe, the Coming of Life, the Story of Humans, the Story of Language, and the Story of Numbers — are the foundation of Montessori elementary curriculum. This worksheet helps you evaluate your current presentations against two criteria: current scientific accuracy, and justice-centered framing.

How to Use

- Complete one row for each Great Lesson. Be honest — this is for your own planning.
- Use the 1–4 scale: 1 = needs significant revision, 2 = partially current, 3 = mostly current, 4 = fully current.
- The 'Action' column is where the work lives. Be specific: 'update human origins section' is more useful than 'revise.'
- Prioritize: not everything needs to change at once. The audit is the starting point.

Lesson Audit

Great Lesson	Last Presented	Scientific Accuracy (1–4)	Justice-Centered Framing (1–4)	Materials Condition (1–4)	Priority Action
Story of the Universe (Cosmic Education)					
Coming of Life (Timeline of Life)					
Story of Humans (Coming of Humans)					

Story of Language (History of Writing)					
Story of Numbers (History of Math)					

Scientific Accuracy — What to Check

Story of the Universe

- Big Bang framing: current cosmology (13.8 billion years, not 'explosion in space')
- Stellar nucleosynthesis included (elements forged in stars)
- Earth formation: accurate timeline (4.5 billion years)
- No geocentric or anthropocentric framing

Coming of Life

- Accurate evolutionary framing (not teleological — evolution has no 'goal')
- Includes microorganisms accurately and early in the timeline
- Human evolution presented accurately (shared ancestry, not linear progress)
- Timeline reflects current paleontological consensus

Story of Humans

- Human origins: Out of Africa consensus represented
- No narrative of 'primitive to civilized' — avoids hierarchical framing
- Cognitive revolution and language origins accurate
- Represents full geographic diversity of early humans

Story of Language

- Writing origins: Sumerian cuneiform and other non-Western origins represented
- Includes non-alphabetic writing systems (logographic, syllabic)
- Not Eurocentric in framing

Story of Numbers

- Mathematical origins: Babylonian, Egyptian, Mayan, Indian systems represented
- Zero: Includes South Asian origin
- Not Eurocentric in framing or progression

Justice-Centered Framing — Questions to Ask

- Whose story is centered? Whose is absent?
- Does the narrative move from 'primitive' to 'advanced'? (This framing should be removed.)
- Are non-Western civilizations presented as contributors to human knowledge — not just recipients of European development?
- Is human diversity (geographic, cultural, linguistic) represented accurately and with dignity?
- Does the narrative of cooperation include who was excluded from that cooperation historically?
- Are the materials (images, figures, illustrations) representative?
- Would children from all backgrounds in your community see their ancestors as part of this story?

Planning Notes

For deeper support with curriculum revision, see the Origins Series at montessorimakersgroup.org/learning/origins
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