

INTRODUCTION

We reviewed the four major transcript products (*Transcripts Made Easy*, *Total Transcript Solutions*, *Transcript Boot Camp*, and *TranscriptPro*) in the areas of **information**, **support** and **tools**. However, these three categories are not equally important.

Information: Most of the basic transcript information offered is similar, although *TranscriptPro* gets bonus points for integrating relevant facts and important distinctions into the actual writing of the transcript. However, packaged answers fail to address the real difficulties in creating a transcript. Differences among individual colleges and variations in the student's academic experience cannot be resolved by generalizations. These difficulties can sometimes be overcome with the help of specialized instructions, such as that offered by *Total Transcript Solutions*, but personal support is far more helpful. Additionally, schools employ a dismayingly wide range of formal and informal practices in determining even the most fundamental transcript components. For instance, there is no recognized standard for determining grades, honors status, or grade point average. With no universal standards or practices to follow, homeschool parents can become enmeshed in a moral quagmire as they attempt to honestly and fairly produce a document that is vital to their child's academic success. Professional reassurance is one of the few remedies to this dilemma.

Support is the most critical element when looking for help with transcripts, for reasons previously given: a conference is invaluable in solving issues particular to your child's transcript, as well as providing reassurance in the face of indecision, which may be the main difficulty that stalls a transcript. Frankly, no product compares to *Total Transcript Solutions*, which offers four personal conferences with Lee Binz, who may be the country's foremost expert on homeschool transcripts.

Tools are the software or templates provided to create a transcript; these receive more attention than they merit, in my opinion. After all, templates are available online or can be created with just a little expertise with a word program. It is true that *TranscriptPro's* stunning program will walk you through the transcript process in an almost conversational tone, much like tax preparation software. However (also like tax preparation software), it is almost inevitable that some confusion will remain, some questions will not be answered, and some of your child's work will not fit the template.

QUICKVIEW

Total Transcript Solutions (Lee Binz) \$47

Pros:

Authored by Lee Binz, one of the country's foremost expert on homeschool transcripts

Four weekly phone coaching sessions with the author

Multiple transcript templates

An abundance of audio, video, and print resources

Cons:

At times the options and variety of materials can be almost bewildering.

Transcripts Made Easy (Janice Campbell)

Pros:

Email support from the author

Inexpensive (half the price of the others)

Cons:

No templates provided

Education Plus (Inge Cannon)

A) Transcript Boot Camp, \$79

Pros:

Authored by Inge Cannon, one of the country's foremost expert on homeschool transcripts

Four hours of DVDs and 76-page syllabus in an electronic format (PDF)

Cons:

Expensive (syllabus without DVDs is \$29)

Material is static: it cannot adapt to new information

No support

B) Transcript Pro, \$49

Pros:

A stunning piece of software that will walk you through the transcript process in an almost conversational tone

Cons:

No support

Material is static: it cannot adapt to new information

SIDE-BY-SIDE COMPARISON

Product	<i>Transcripts Made Easy</i> (Janice Campbell)	<i>Total Transcript Solutions</i> (Lee Binz)	<i>Transcript Boot Camp</i> (Inge Cannon)	<i>TranscriptPro</i> (Inge Cannon)
Price	\$25 + shipping (\$22 for eBook download)	\$47	\$79 (\$29 for syllabus without DVDs)	\$49

Information	★★★	★★★★★	★★★	★★★★
	<p>Campbell offers basic transcript information in a straight-forward format that is easy to follow.</p> <p>The inevitable confusion and necessary adaptations that arise from such generic instruction could presumably be managed by the phone support that is included.</p> <p>More problematic are a few instances when Campbell provides definitive answers that may be inaccurate for a particular university.¹</p>	<p>In terms of quality or quantity, nothing else comes close.</p> <p>When considering the quality of the information, Lee Binz has two distinct advantages:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) superlative expertise 2) information that is dynamic, so that it responds to specific needs and is able to change as needed. 3) Unmatched quantity. <i>Total Transcript Solutions</i> provides an almost bewildering array of audio, video, and print resources.² 	<p>Although sharing Lee Binz's impressive credentials, <i>Transcript Boot Camp</i> lacks flexibility, as the information is set in DVD or print form. Some people may be put off by PDF format of the syllabus, preferring print.</p> <p>The DVD lectures offers standard transcript information in an authoritative tone, which at times belies the complexities and nuances of the subject matter.</p>	<p>Although lacking Lee Binz's flexibility, <i>TranscriptPro</i> is strong precisely at Binz' weakest point: the software makes information available as you need it.</p>
Support	★★★	★★★★★	N/A	N/A

	Personal e-mail support from the author “while working with the homeschool transcript.”	Four weekly phone coaching sessions with Lee Binz, an incredible opportunity. (Even more support is available for a monthly fee. ³)	No support provided.	No support provided.
Tools	★	★★★★	N/A	★★★★★
	<p>Only provides reproducible worksheets and forms. There are no templates, other than instructions to help you create your own transcripts using Microsoft Word, although details are no longer applicable to the Word 2007 or 2010.</p> <p>The website does provide an excellent GPA calculator available to all.</p>	<p><i>Transcript Template Collection</i>, available in Word and Excel format. No actual software for creating transcripts.</p>	<p>None included.</p> <p>Inge does sell the superlative <i>Transcript Pro</i>, but, purchased together, the cost would rise to \$128.</p>	<p>The only software for creating a transcript. This marvelous program has the same easy format as a tax return program, guiding you step-by-step. As you answer questions, the transcript is created.</p>
Link	http://www.everyday-education.com/tme/index.shtml	http://www.totaltranscriptsolution.com/	http://www.homeschooltranscripts.com/Products/Transcript-Boot-Camp-DVD.aspx	http://www.homeschooltranscripts.com/Products/Transcript-Pro.aspx

CONCLUSIONS

All four products have something to offer, but it is impossible to ignore the striking advantages of *Total Transcript Solutions*.

However, *Transcripts Made Easy* is appealingly inexpensive, while still offering email support.

For those looking for sophisticated software that offers intuitive, guided instruction, *TranscriptPro* has no peer.

Disclosure: I initiated this review in conjunction with a seminar presentation, the notes for which can be found at [LINK](#). *Total Transcript Solutions* and *Transcript Pro* have generously agreed to make a modest donation to the Omaha Homeschool Learning Center for products purchased through our website. *Transcripts Made Easy* did not respond to my inquiries.

Note 1: For instance, Campbell states that a college counselor is looking for students who “at a minimum” have some kind of talent, are well-rounded, and “will bring valuable personal qualities to the university” (41). However, the varied personal preferences of admission counselors resist such general claims. Having taught at a large public university, I can easily say that most of my students completely lacked several of these attributes. Likewise, the description of a “genuine A student” (Campbell 41) more aptly characterizes students in the top ten percent of most public schools. After fifteen years of high school teaching, I would estimate that many “A” students would not measure up to Campbell’s criteria.

Campbell also suggests that one can avoid transcripts altogether by transferring from a community college. This is untrue for the University of Nebraska at Omaha, and she neglects to discuss lost scholarship opportunities, or the fact that typically one can transfer a large number of college credits (often up to 60) and still be considered an incoming freshman, which would still require a transcript.

Note 2: The website and webinars of *Total Transcript Solutions* provide plentiful information at no cost, including newsletters, emails, and Facebook updates.

Included in the transcript package is a one-hour audio overview (“Making a Transcript”) and a 109-page manual ([The Easy Truth About Homeschool Transcripts](#)).

A 30-day trial membership to the HomeScholar Silver Training Club is also included as a “bonus.” This includes a dizzying array of material, including

--Videos and audio talks on such subjects such as “Preparing Homeschoolers for College,” “Creating a Transcript,” “Grades and Credits,” and “Record Keeping.”

--Answers to particularly challenging questions, posted online.

--Customized checklists for every year from middle school through high school

--And numerous articles with summaries and links to other web training resources.

Other “bonus” material is also included, see website for a complete list.

“High School Testing” Audio: SAT, ACT, PSAT, AP, CLEP information

Resource Pack: Planning Guide, Sample Grading Criteria, College Planning Calendar

“7 Secrets to Homeschooling Through a Financial Storm” (a 35-page report)

Note 3: Lee Binz (*Total Transcript Solutions*) has created an on-line resource library and support network. For \$47 per month, Gold Club members have access to

--Extended Personalized Support: Free office hours once a week, including a free weekly 20-minute phone consultation with document review.

--Group Support: Monthly group call/webinar with Lee Binz and other Gold Care members.

--How-To Training Courses: Videos and audios of selected public presentations on subjects such as "Preparing Homeschoolers for College," "Creating a Transcript," "Grades and Credits," and "Record Keeping"

--FAQs: Comprehensive answers to some of the most challenging high school questions

--Templates and Tools: Expanded templates (including transcript templates) and tools

--Special Monthly Features: EBook of the Month, Scholarship of the Month, Course Description of the Month, Schedule of the Month, etc.

--College Prep Checklists: Customized checklists for every year from middle school through high school

--HomeScholar Articles and Other Training Resources: All of Lee Binz’s articles, with handy summaries and links, as well as other web training resources

<http://www.thehomescholar.com/gold-care.php>