

Homework Time

Made Easier And More Effective



Homework helps students learn important lessons. It can reinforce what they are learning in school. It can also help them develop responsible study habits.

But homework can sometimes be a hassle for parents. You may feel that you are constantly nagging your child to do homework. You may not know your child has an assignment until it's almost time for bed. Or you may wonder whether the time spent on homework is really helping your child.

Here are some answers to parents' questions about homework—and some parent-tested tips that will help you make the most of your child's study time.

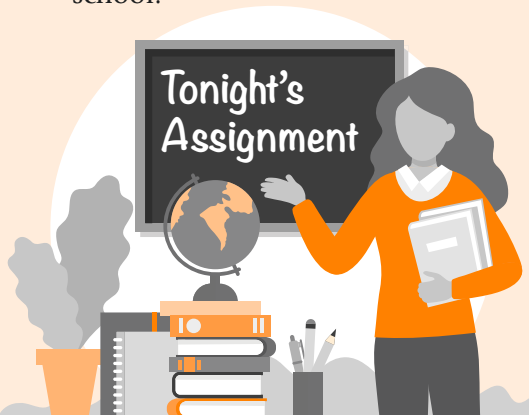
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Why do teachers assign homework?

Teachers give homework to reinforce what they are teaching in class and help students learn. Teachers say:

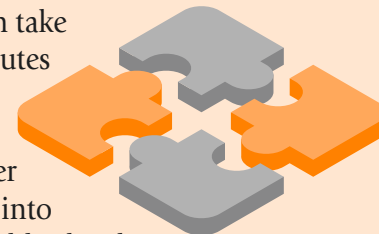
- ✓ **Homework is good practice.** If a student is having trouble with a subject, time spent reviewing and practicing concepts can often make the difference between mastery and just getting by.
- ✓ **Homework builds self-discipline,** independence, responsibility and time-management skills.
- ✓ **Homework helps teachers see** which students need help.
- ✓ **Homework helps parents know** what's going on in school. If you check your child's assignments regularly, you'll have a clear idea of what your child is learning at school.



Put an end to homework hassles

Here are some tips to end the worst homework hassles:

- **Check on supplies.** Does your child have paper, pens and pencils at home? How about access to a dictionary (in book form or online)?
- **Respect your child's study time.** That means no interruptions, no phone calls or text messages—and no visits from friends.
- **Work on your own projects** while your child works. Pay bills, write letters or do some of your own work. You'll send your child a message that you think study time is important.
- **Break it up.** For many children, "divide and conquer" is an effective way to tackle assignments. It often helps to work for 15 or 20 minutes and then take five minutes to relax. Break up longer projects into manageable chunks.



What can families do to help?

Make sure your child has time to complete assignments.

If you feel that your child has to spend every free minute on schoolwork, you may want to look more closely at what's going on.

- **Review your child's after-school schedule.** Some kids have schedules that are busier than a business executive's. But school is your child's most important job. Dropping an activity or two may give your child more time for studying.
- **Make sure "study time" is spent on schoolwork.** Some kids waste a lot of time daydreaming. Some play games online. Stay nearby and check on your child for a few days. You may see ways to help put time to better use.
- **Limit recreational screen time.** You may want to set a rule that there's no TV, videos or online games on school days—or that there's no non-school screen time until assignments are completed.
- **Share your concerns with the teacher.** Ask about expectations for students and families regarding homework. The school wants to work with families to find solutions to students' homework struggles. You may also want to talk with a school counselor or the school principal.

Set a regular study time.

A regular study time helps children develop responsibility. When children get in the habit of studying each day, they learn to use their time better.

Help your child find a schedule that works for him and for the family. Together, write study time on a calendar, just as you write down practice times, lessons or classes.

Let your child do the work.

If parents help *too* much, teachers can't see what a child is—and isn't—learning. You may need to help your child get organized. You may need to sit nearby so you can answer a few questions. *But let your child do the work.*



Say that there's never a 'no homework' day.

Even if your child says no assignment is due the next day, he can spend study time reviewing, reading or getting in some extra math practice.

When your child always asks for help

Of course you want your child to ask for help with schoolwork when she really needs it, but not with every single problem. Make it clear that you'll help when it's really necessary. But encourage your child to try to figure things out before asking.

Develop strong study habits

Experts say that after doing something repeatedly over time it will likely become a habit. Talk with your child and decide on some effective study habits to work toward this year. It won't be long until study time is easier and more productive—and your child is learning more!

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