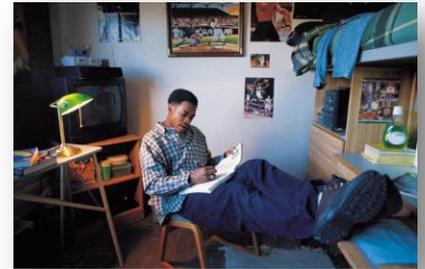


RESEARCH AND THEORY ON HOMEWORK

Homework is an essential component of U.S. education and has shown a positive effect on student achievement. Reasons commonly cited for homework are: It extends the learning opportunities beyond the school day and allows for additional practice of important skills or for the student to explore the concepts more fully on his/her own time.

Writing in **The Art and Science of Teaching** (ASCD, 2007), Robert Marzano, states these cautions and recommendations (p. 70-71) that can guide teachers in the use of homework:



- (1) Homework should be structured to ensure high completion rates and should relate directly to identified learning goals.
- (2) The amount of homework assigned to students should be different from elementary to middle school to high school; i.e., the younger the student, the less homework teachers should assign.
- (3) Homework should involve parents and guardians in appropriate ways, but should be designed so that students can perform it independently.
- (4) The purpose of homework should be identified and articulated (e.g., purposes such as practice and preparation or elaboration).
- (5) If homework is assigned, it should be commented on. Research has shown that homework on which the teacher provides written comments for students has shown percentile gains on standardized tests of as much as 30 points.

PURPOSES OF HOMEWORK



Purpose	Reason	Examples
<i>Reinforcement/Responsibility</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To keep up-to-date with classroom work • To prepare for the next day's class work or for upcoming lessons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing classroom assignments, including reading responses, notes, exercises, pieces of writing, reading selections • Collecting information, reading background materials, or studying for quizzes, tests and exams • Using planners to establish regular study and review time
<p><i>Practice & Application:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Develop thinking & study skills</i> 2. <i>Promote initiative and self directions</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop, review, and reinforce specific skills • To transfer skills or concepts into new situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing extra questions if an assessment item demonstrates that the student has not mastered a skill • Writing a letter after being taught the components of a business letter • Reviewing and drilling of number operations and troublesome spelling words, where necessary • Being read to, reading aloud, and independent reading • Practice skills learned in music, foreign language
<i>Extension/Creative</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enrich classroom experiences and deepen the student's understanding • To provide opportunities for problem-solving and critical thinking • To integrate skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying local plant and animal life in one's environment • Working on projects, research and independent study • Inventing a product to solve a problem • Creating designs, stories, drama

DESCRIPTIONS



There are four general types of homework that may be assigned, each having a different intended purpose. The purpose of any assigned homework must be aligned with course curriculum and be grade level appropriate. *Homework should be produced by the student.*

TYPE OF HOMEWORK:	WHAT IS IT?	WHY IS IT ASSIGNED?	HOW WILL IT BE USED?	EXAMPLES
PRACTICE	Work that reviews and reinforces skills and concepts taught in class.	Helps students develop fluency and moves learning into long term memory.	Prepares students to perform the required skill(s) independently.	3-10 math problems that reinforce the day's learning; reading to or with an adult
COMPLETION (Also referred to on Page 17)	Work assigned during the school day not completed in class. CAUTION: Teachers must monitor the amount and the evaluation of this type of homework.	Helps prevent students from falling behind.	Complete work that was not finished in class; if student is working efficiently and regularly not finishing, teacher conference is indicated.	Complete a math assignment; do a rewrite of an essay; fill out questionnaire on what went well/not well on a group project.
PREPARATION	Work that prepared students for upcoming lessons or units.	Provides background which prepares students for a study, or it helps to connect their own prior knowledge and/or experiences for an upcoming study.	Provide student with necessary books and resources prior to assignment so it is readily available in all homes to enable student with same prior knowledge as classmates when lesson begins.	Student reads background information on historical event; interview a parent/adult about family traditions prior to a writing assignment on cultural traditions in our world.
EXTENSION	Work that explores and refines learning in new contexts or integrates and expands on classroom learning.	Encourage students to problem solve, think creatively, and think critically.	To be effective, this homework does not require a student to learn curriculum content independently; instead, students deepen understanding and relate. learning to the real world.	Extend science project on "how seeds grow" by having student take home seeds and plant, tend, and report/chart what happens.

HOMEWORK

STUDENT BEST PRACTICES

- ✎ Listen to class directions for assignments.
- ✎ Be clear about the purpose/reason for the assignment(s).
- ✎ Ask for further explanation from the teacher when an assignment is not clear.
- ✎ Be sure you know how the work will be evaluated.
- ✎ Write assignment instructions that include the date due. Keep an up-to-date assignment notebook at appropriate grade levels.
- ✎ Use time well during the school day for opportunities to work on assignments.
- ✎ Take home the instructions and materials needed to complete the assignment. Be careful and responsible for school property.
- ✎ Set a daily time to complete the homework.
- ✎ Start long-term assignments far ahead of the due date, dividing the assignment into manageable parts. Don't wait until the last night before the assignment is due to begin working on it.
- ✎ Do your own work, but ask your parents for assistance if needed.
- ✎ Ask your teacher for help the next day if you did not understand the assignment.
- ✎ Do your best work.
- ✎ **Read for pleasure.**
- ✎ Share with your parents your completed work.
- ✎ Return completed assignments on the date due.



HOMEWORK

PARENT BEST PRACTICES

Parent/Teacher Communication:

- ✓ Meet teachers early in the year.
- ✓ Find out about homework policies, degree of parental involvement with homework.
- ✓ Maintain communication throughout the year.
- ✓ Attend orientation, open house/back-to-school night, and parent/teacher conferences.
- ✓ Check the district web page for district and school information.
- ✓ Check various means of communication (folders, backpacks, assignment notebooks/planners, homework hotlines).
- ✓ Read school newsletters.
- ✓ Communicate with the teacher if you have concerns regarding your child's homework or if your child demonstrates difficulty completing homework responsibilities.

At Home:

- ✓ Give homework assignments a high priority when considering family activities and obligations.
- ✓ Establish a consistent homework routine at an early age.
- ✓ Build consistency by having an educational time each day at home even if your child does not have homework.
- ✓ Provide a quiet organized place with needed materials.
- ✓ Establish a time of day for homework.
- ✓ Accommodate for differences in your children's abilities.
- ✓ Keep in mind what works for one child may not necessarily work for others.
- ✓ Reinforce good study habits.
- ✓ Monitor course selection, number of extracurricular activities and after school employment to allow for recreation/relaxation time.
- ✓ Maintain a healthy sleep and eating schedule.



PARENT SUPPORT:

- ✓ Provide encouragement without doing the homework for your child. Your involvement may interfere with your child's learning if you give answers or complete assignments. Ask questions to help guide your child through the process. If you support independence, your child's achievement will increase.



- ✓ Stay out of power struggles with your child. Allow your child to make mistakes, the springboard for further learning.
- ✓ If your child becomes frustrated with a homework assignment, suggest a brief break before returning to the assignment.
- ✓ Provide assistance/support when research is needed (e.g., internet supervision, transportation to public library).
- ✓ Understand the importance of homework in your child's education. Maintain a positive attitude and show interest. More homework will be completed if you are involved.
- ✓ Stay flexible to accommodate for different learning styles of your children, and recognize that your child may have different styles of learning and ways of demonstrating their knowledge.
- ✓ Positively reinforce your child for his/her efforts by displaying his/her papers and artwork at home.
- ✓ Praise your child for persevering, completing and taking responsibility for homework.