

HOMework IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract: *This article explains the benefits and difficulties of doing homework for elementary school pupils and some researchers' opinions about the period of doing homework.*

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We know that in most schools around the world, pupils should do their homework that is given by their teachers. We, usually, do not pay attention to the advantages or disadvantages of homework assignment. Let's think together, what is homework? Should pupils in elementary schools do homework? What is the benefit of doing homework for elementary school students?

There are many definitions for the word of homework, but I want to share my favorite and the easiest definition: homework is an assignment given to a student to be completed outside the regular class period. This means that even elementary schools students should also do it themselves at home. Firstly, why teachers want to give homework for students;

- Homework teaches young students about time management.
- Homework teaches elementary school students how to set priorities.
- Homework helps teachers determine how well the lessons are being understood by their students.
- Homework teaches young students how to problem solve.
- Homework gives every student another opportunity to review class material.
- Homework gives parents a chance to see what is being learned in school.
- Homework teaches students how to take responsibility for their part in the educational process, especially, it is very important for young pupils.
- Homework teaches students that they may have to do things—even if they don't want to, this can help them for their future adult life.
- Homework teaches young students to work independently.
- Homework teaches students the importance of planning, staying organized, and taking action.

On the other hand, some believe that homework may be a burden for young learners. Despite the hope of parents and teachers alike, there is little evidence that homework significantly helps students progress. Studies have been done, like the 2006 meta-analysis by Harris Cooper at Duke University, to find what effect, if any, homework has on the success of students at every age. Books have been researched and written, like Rethinking

Homework: Best Practices That Support Diverse Needs by education professor Cathy Vatterott, investigating the correlation or causation of homework and achievement. While Cooper's conclusion gives credit to homework for improving study habits, self-discipline and independent problem-solving, the study also showed that "homework can cause physical and emotional fatigue, fuel negative attitudes about learning, and limit leisure time for children." Vatterott argues that, even with evidence of a correlation between homework and academic achievement, there is no proof that homework causes the achievement.

Disadvantages of having homework for primary school students:

- Students are under stress due to homework. Young students who must spend countless hours completing complex tasks due after school have negative health repercussions from receiving homework assignments. Children who experience stress may experience health problems and develop a bad attitude toward learning.

- Students' social lives are affected by their homework. Students with a lot of schoolwork to complete, even late at night, have less time to socialize, negatively affecting their communication ability and making them more withdrawn.

- Students become bored. Children are under a lot of strain due to the abundance of homework obligations. Children become disinterested in school and less focused due to this pressure. Time must pass for students to turn to other activities.

- Academic burnout is caused by homework. After a full school day, an assignment typically takes a lot of time. As a result, students are exhausted when they get home, and the vast amount of homework they must complete often leads to complete burnout.

- They lose their power. Since kids ask their parents, siblings, or tutors for assistance, the homework assignment is ineffective for its original purpose. Students learn ideas better in the classroom than when they try to apply them at home, where they fight to fulfil due dates or win over their professors.

Educational researcher Youki Terada reports that the National PTA and the National Education Association support the traditional 10 minutes of homework per grade in school but that both parents and teachers are quick to qualify that standard.

At the elementary level, when students are learning how to learn, assigning even 10 or 20 minutes of homework to children who are not yet prepared to work independently can lead to a growing dislike for school and learning in general. It also puts undue pressure on families that place a high value on both quality time together and the importance of daily chores.

However, there is one activity that researchers, parents and teachers agree is worth making time for: reading. According to Hirsh-Pasek, "There is practically nothing that will be more important than reading time. It's a time when kids learn integrated narrative. It's a time when they learn about relationships and hear vocabulary that they don't hear anywhere else." In fact, the current trend is to eliminate homework entirely except for independent and family reading time.

The standard homework guideline recommended by the National Parent Teacher Association and the National Education Association is the "10-minute rule" – 10 minutes of nightly homework per grade level. A fourth grader, for instance, would receive a total of 40 minutes of homework per night.

However, this does not always happen, especially since not every student learns the same. A 2015 study published in the American Journal of Family Therapy found that primary school children actually received three times the recommended amount of homework — and that family stress increased along with the homework load.

Young children can only remain attentive for short periods, so large amounts of homework, especially lengthy projects, can negatively affect students' views on school. Some individual long-term projects – like having to build a replica city, for example – typically become an assignment for parents rather than students, Fass says.

"It's one thing to assign a project like that in which several kids are working on it together," she adds. "In (that) case, the kids do normally work on it. It's another to send it home to the families, where it becomes a burden and doesn't really accomplish very much."

How to Address Homework Overload

First, assess if the workload takes as long as it appears. Sometimes children may start working on a homework assignment, wander away and come back later, "Parents don't see it, but they know that their child has started doing their homework four hours ago and still not done it". "They don't see that there are those four hours where their child was doing lots of other things. So, the homework assignment itself actually is not four hours long. It is the way the child is approaching it. "If homework is becoming stressful or workload is excessive, experts suggest parents first approach the teacher, followed by a school administrator.

Effective Homework

- Specific rules should be followed for homework to be effective.
- Homework should be helpful in the eyes of the students. Both the overall objective of homework and the reason for each specific activity should be explained by teachers.
- Tasks should be diverse, entertaining, and relevant.
- Homework assignments should follow good classroom practice. Tasks should be both manageable and attainable.

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