

Answers to Your Toughest Homework Questions

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We will cover some simple ideas on how parents can maximize their child's chances to develop the skills, habits and attitudes needed for lifelong success.

How much time should children spend doing their homework?

Educators generally agree on these guidelines:

- Grades K-2 – 10-20 minutes per day
- Grades 3-6 – 30-60 minutes daily

Middle and High School

The amount of homework will vary by subject. In addition to daily assignments, older students may also receive long-term projects, such as term papers, that may have deadlines weeks away. The key for academic success for teenagers is organization and planning.

It may help parents of middle and high school students to discuss with their child's teachers the classroom homework policies (ask how much time each teacher expects students to spend on homework nightly).

WCS Handbook Policy on Homework:

K	15 minutes
1-2	30 minutes
3-4	45 minutes
5	1 hour
6-8	1 ½ hours

This does not include daily reading or time needed to study. If a student chooses to study for a test in one night, the consequence is more homework that night.

When I ask my child if he has homework, he says he's already finished or none was assigned. How can I ensure homework is completed?

- Assume homework is assigned every night or studying is required.
- Ask younger children to show you their work so you can check it and help them correct their mistakes by working on the answer together. Ask your child to explain the reasoning for his answers. This develops critical thinking skills.
- Check RenWeb!

- Make studying, not just homework, a daily habit. Even if a student does not have an assignment due the next day, he can use that time to read, review his notes or organize his backpack.

- Ask younger children to show you their work so you can check it and help them correct their mistakes by working on the answer together. Ask your child to explain the reasoning for his answers. This develops critical thinking skills.

How can parents help their child achieve academic success in the new school year?

1. Parents can maximize their child's chances for success in school by creating a home environment that works with your child to efficiently tackle school tasks.

2. **Set Goals:** Help your child set attainable goals for each class and help her identify what will need to be done to reach each goal. For example, to get an A in American History she will need to turn in all her homework, participate in class, etc.

3. Know Your Child: There are different types of learners. If you help your child work within his style, he will work more effectively.

For more information on your child's learning style, talk to your child's teacher. You may also utilize our Resource Teacher, Julie Weaver, who can be contacted through the school office.

4. Set Weekly Milestones: For big projects or exams, get a large calendar for your child's desk area and help her set short timelines to ensure projects and studying aren't left until the night before.

5. Celebrate Success: Congratulate your child when each milestone is met.

Motivation is a key factor in educational success. How can parents motivate children to study?

Here's a shocking fact!

Most students are not internally motivated to do homework.

- Figure out what external motivators you can use to ensure homework is completed each night. That way, your children will know that there are positive consequences to their actions.
- Try to: Keep the rewards significant and interesting, and the negative has to have an adverse effect.
- Try not to: Boring a child is probably the worst thing you can do – either putting him in “time-out”, or if you have a teenager, taking away the keys to the car, so she can’t go out that weekend.
- What works for you?

Homework will become second nature and maybe your kids will become internally motivated over time.

What are tips for elementary and secondary-level students to help improve their study skills?

- 1. Keep a schedule:** Students should keep a schedule of classes, assignments and other key dates. They will be less likely to find themselves scrambling to complete a project at the last minute or cramming the night before a big test. The more comprehensive the schedule, the more efficient most students will be in completing their schoolwork and juggling after-school activities.

2. Take effective notes in class: Effective note-taking is a key academic skill that is rarely taught in the classroom. Note-taking skills include identifying key information and capturing it in a style that makes for effective studying later. Each child is unique and different students need different types of notes. It's important for students to find the note-taking approach that best works for them.

3. Read assignments: As students move into higher grades, they're assigned larger and more complex reading assignments. Students need to deliberately learn to read for key information. If reading skills are weak, it's important for the student to seek help improving them. Otherwise, performance in many subjects may be impacted.

By deliberately focusing on improving study skills, students can see improvements in all aspects of their schoolwork.