

Homework Handbook

Teacher's Guide

This is a supplementary guide for the use of educators in instructional circumstances.

Previous to watching the Student Toolbox module entitled 'Homework Handbook,' teachers are encouraged to begin with a class discussion on the topic. Invite students to contribute their thoughts and questions on the subject matter.

This information will reveal what the students already know about the topic. Teachers can affirm correct responses and prepare students for the reception of new information.

Create a list of ideas and concepts under a heading such as "What We Know Already." Invite further comment as this list is assembled. List student suggestions of what they expect or hope to learn from the video they are about to view.

Tell the students that this list will be revisited after viewing the video. Encourage students to view the video closely so as to determine which of their ideas or questions were adequately addressed or not presented within the module.

After watching the module, initiate a brief discussion. Ask your class to confirm whether the content of the module covered the items on the "What We Know Already" list. Ask the students for a new list of new things they learned and ask questions from the question list and initiate activity from the suggestions provided.

Urge students to do follow-up research using the suggested Internet links and by choosing to read from the titles offered.

Program Summary

Homework can be described as assignments that are to be completed outside of class time. Homework can also be continuing to learn about classroom topics when beyond the school environment. The basic tools for effective homework completion are math, science and language skills. Homework is useful because the reviewing and practicing inherent in homework reinforces learning which should make 'cramming' for tests and exams unnecessary. Homework is affected by decisions related to how much time a student is willing to spend on it each day, what out-of-school commitments need to be scheduled, the time of day that a student does his or her best work, the use of weekends, and the need for snacks, breaks and scheduling. Home time should be divided into 15 minute blocks. The time estimated to complete homework assignments should be 'blocked in' to these blocks. Required or anticipated breaks can be 'Blocked in' as well. Students can choose to work first on assignments that are long or short, easy or difficult, due sooner or later. Scheduling consistency is essential. Remaining blocks can be used in any way you like. The use of an assignment book to list and check off each finished assignment can be a useful advantage. Scheduled breaks can help to ensure good focus while completing homework assignments. Working ahead of schedule where possible and doing some work at school are beneficial. Setting goals, measuring results and then setting new goals indicates improvement. Larger assignments can be broken down into smaller parts and blocked into the schedule. If there are parts of the assignment that appear too difficult or if information appears to be inadequate, focus should be placed on work that can be completed and then the missing

information or assistance can be followed up upon afterward. It's important to make note of special requirements like obtaining a parent's signature or the need to bring requested materials for the next day. Completed work should be checked-off in the assignment book, handed in on time and in the proper folder or format.

Vocabulary

- **Homework** - Assignments to be completed or continued learning about classroom topics outside of class time.
- **Scheduling** - Making decisions regarding the allocation of available capacity or resources including time, equipment and space toward jobs, activities, tasks or assignments.
- **Assignment Book** - An ongoing, organized and dated list of assignments for purposes of task management.
- **Essay** - A literary composition on a single subject expressing a personal view.
- **Cramming** - Extreme short term effort to review or learn subject material in anticipation of a test or exam.
- **Time Management** - The control and structured use of time including the use of planners, routines and calendars.

Pre-viewing Discussion

Before the class assemble their list of "What We Know Already" about homework activities, stimulate and focus their thinking by outlining the following questions designed to ready them for learning:

- What is homework?
- Why is homework important?
- What are the basic skills for doing homework?
- What types of homework assignments are there?

After the class has assembled their list of "What We Know Already" ask for suggestions of what they expect or hope to learn from the video they are about to view. Tell the students that this list will be revisited after viewing the video. Encourage students to view the video closely so as to determine which of their ideas or questions were adequately addressed or not presented within the module.

Focus Questions

1. What is Homework?
2. Why do teachers assign homework?
3. How can doing homework help you in the classroom?
4. What are the basic tools for successful homework?
5. How does doing homework help when it's time for tests and exams?
6. Why is studying useful?
7. Is it ever okay to do homework with a friend?
8. What is time management?
9. Why is it good to take a break while doing homework?

10. How can a schedule help with homework?
11. Why is consistency important when completing homework assignments?
12. What is an assignment book?
13. Is it a good idea to work 'ahead of schedule'?
14. What should you do if part of your assignment seems too difficult?
15. What should you do if you are missing some information needed for your homework?

Follow-up Discussion

Following the viewing it is important to review the beliefs of the class versus the facts revealed by the presentation. Research has concluded that students will maintain their previous ideas and concepts until they specifically recognize and adjust their own mistakes. As such, it is important to guide students toward the correct answers and facts to the questions and issues that they contributed to the "What We Know Already" list.

An effective approach is to pose thought-provoking questions and concepts that lead to fresh thinking. A couple of examples are:

What types of homework do you think are most effective?

How much homework do you think is appropriate?

How important are your family and your home environment in the completion of homework?

Follow-up Activities

Have students suggest times that they remember having fun while doing a homework assignment. Also, have them tell of homework experiences that were not fun. Elaborate on these thoughts with suggestions to improve such circumstances.

Invite an open discussion on the creation of an assignment book. Take suggestions for how it should be structured and what should be included. Assemble a 'Homework Checklist.' Create an imaginary character and have the class design a complete block schedule for their pretend classmate.

Have students list all of the activities in their day and estimate how much time they spend on each. Then have the students 'block in' the activities into their own schedule of 15 minute intervals.

Suggested Internet Resources

<http://school.discovery.com/homeworkhelp/bjpinchbeck/>

Assistance on many subjects, links and questions answered service

<http://www.yhti.net/~melody/main.htm>

Links to over 3000 pages of information and resources

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/education/homework/>

Resource materials on numerous topics

Suggested Print Resources

Cogorno Radencich, Marguerite & Espeland, Pamela & Shay Schumm, Jeanne, *How to Help Your Child With Homework: Every Caring Parent's Guide to Encouraging Good Study Habits and Ending the Homework Wars For Parents of Children Ages 6-13*

Free Spirit, Minneapolis, MN, December 1996

McEwen, Elaine K., *The Dog Ate It: Conquering Homework Hassles*

Harold Shaw Publishing, London, July 1996

Zentall, Sydney, & Goldstein Sam *Seven Steps to Homework Success: A Family Guide for Solving Common Homework Problems*

Specialty Pr Inc, December 1998