

# Does Homework have any Value?

Some people say [homework](#) has many benefits whilst others believe it actually has detrimental effects on academic performance. We look at the pros and the cons in detail so you can make up your own mind.

Why are children given homework? Does it help or hinder their learning? The jury is still out on that one – some say homework has many benefits whilst others believe it actually has detrimental effects on academic performance. So, which is it? As ever, you can rely on Education Quizzes to find out the facts. This guide will tell you both the pros and the cons of homework.

## Why are Children given Homework?

It's a fact that almost every school sets its students homework. That being the case, then there must be benefits to it, right? So, why are children given homework? There are many reasons (which we'll look at in detail later on) but the main ones are these: to reinforce what has been taught in school, and to help pupils become more independent learners.

Whether you like it or not, homework is a part of school and must be completed. If it isn't, then children's grades will suffer as a result. Think of it as part of a test – if the work isn't done then the test won't be passed.

## What are the Benefits of Homework?

Supporters of homework give many reasons why it helps education. It has a great number of benefits which are all undeniable. As promised earlier, here's an in-depth look at the reasons why homework is good for children's education:

### Consolidation of what's Learned in School

The best way to learn something is to go over it again and again. When a topic has been studied in class there is always a risk that not every child has understood it. Setting homework on what has been taught helps children to absorb the information. It also tests how much they know and allows them to practise new skills they have learned.

### Extra Learning Time

Children don't spend all that long at school. Most are there for six hours or so a day, which includes breaks, form time, assemblies and such. The amount of time actually spent learning is very limited and, without homework, there would be a lot to cram in. Homework gives children the extra time they need to look more deeply into a topic and understand it well. Coursework and projects are often important parts of a course. Working on them at home frees up valuable lesson time which can be spent learning new things.

### Parental Involvement

How many parents really know what their children are studying at school? Sure, we have parents' evenings but they only give us a small peek into the classroom. One advantage of homework is

that it lets parents see for themselves the topics covered in their child's lessons. This gives us the assurance that our children are receiving a quality education – or alerts us if they are not.

## **Family Time**

Many people think that homework gets in the way of family time, but it can actually bring families closer together. If a child is having problems with a question, they can always go to mum or dad for help. Even for parents who don't know the answers, this is a great opportunity to spend time with their child, working together to find things out.

## **Self-discipline**

Homework goes some way towards making children more independent. It's their responsibility to make sure the work gets done so they have to set aside the time to do it, away from distractions such as mobile phones and games consoles. This helps them to better manage their time, to prioritise certain tasks and to be self-reliant. These are all good life skills which will help in the adult world – getting something finished requires organisation, dedication and hard work.

## **Comfortable Surroundings**

It may seem odd but, even though classrooms exist so that children can learn, not everybody learns best when they're in one. Some students prefer to learn at home, where they are in relaxed and comfortable surroundings. This applies particularly to kinaesthetic, visual or audio learners who are free to create the working conditions they prefer. For example, some children learn best when music is playing in the background – something they'll never get in a classroom but will at home.

## **What are the Disadvantages of Homework?**

So, now we've looked at the advantages of homework, what about the disadvantages? There are many people who believe that homework should be banned and they cite many reasons. Here's an in depth look at some of the major reasons why some think homework is a hindrance to education rather than a help:

### **Homework puts Children under Unnecessary Stress**

Some believe that children have enough work to do at school and homework just adds to their burden. Just as adults like to forget about work once they're back from the office, so too would children. If they had any problems at school, homework serves only to bring the problems into the home. They might feel they have too much on their plate and this can cause stress and all that comes with it - insomnia, mood swings or aggression.

To answer this, I would say that children are not given work they are unable to do. If they are, then they are probably in the wrong set at school. Talk to your child's teacher if you think the work they are being given is too hard for them.

## **Homework makes Children Tired**

It's well known that children need rest and sleep in order to develop. Many believe that, after a long day at school, children should be allowed to relax. What's more, they say that tired minds don't function well, so expecting top quality work from an already tired child is unreasonable. Some even say that homework gets in the way of sleep.

Yes, children need to rest but, with 17 hours between the end of one school day and the start of the next, there is plenty of time for that. If a child is missing out on sleep then there is something other than homework responsible for that.

## **Homework gets in the way of Family Time**

What with parents going out to work and children going off to school, evenings and weekends are the only times when families get to spend time together. If these are spent doing homework then family time is cut short.

Children get plenty of time off school, what with weekends, school holidays and short working days. It would be a very unlucky student indeed who has to spend their entire evening and weekend doing homework. If your child does then they are being set too much and you should talk to their teachers.

## **Homework is Unfair on some Students**

It's well known that children from poorer backgrounds tend to do less well academically than their middle-class peers. There could be many reasons for this but one prominent one is that they have less access to study resources – the internet, books, university educated parents etc. As a consequence, children from poorer families are at a disadvantage when it comes to homework.

This is undoubtedly true and is, unfortunately, a fact – children from better off families do better in school and in life than those from deprived backgrounds. There's no arguing with it.

## **Homework Encourages Cheating**

Because homework is done away from school, there is ample opportunity for children to cheat. If students study together, or in a group, then there is the temptation to copy one another's work. There is also the risk of over-enthusiastic parents who, rather than helping their child with homework, actually do it for them.

Parents and children who do cheat are doing themselves no favours. In exams there is no one to copy from and no one else to do the work for you. Homework is not to blame for this though – that's like blaming the shops for shoplifters.

## **Homework creates Conflict between Children and Parents**

Having to do schoolwork at home adds pressure to parents. It is they, rather than teachers, who must insist that the work is done. A child who wants to play with their friends or watch some TV

instead of working has to be disciplined by the parent, causing unnecessary friction. School rules should be enforced by teachers, not by parents.

But parents do not have to make their children do homework. It's better to let the child reap the consequences of their actions. If they don't do their homework they'll probably face punishment at school and lower grades. That should be motivation enough for them.

## **Homework Impacts on Children's Social Lives**

Children's development is not just about the things they learn in school – it's also about learning good social skills. Spending time with their friends is actually good for children's development. Homework gets in the way of social lives and, if children are denied this, then they may face problems as adults – social awkwardness or social phobia for example. They might also feel resentful about homework stifling their friendships which promotes a negative attitude towards school and learning.

However, if a sensible amount of homework is set then there should still be plenty of time for socialising. If there isn't then, again, your child is being set too much homework. If that is the case then talk to their teachers about it.

## **How much Time should Children spend on Homework?**

It seems to me that homework is only a problem if too much of it is being set. But how much is too much? Until recently, the amount of homework children of different ages should be given was decided by the Government. Here is what they suggested:

### **Primary School Children:**

- Years 1 and 2: 60 minutes per week
- Years 3 and 4: 90 minutes per week
- Years 5 and 6: 30 minutes a day

### **Secondary School Children:**

- Years 7 and 8: 45 to 90 minutes a day
- Year 9: 60 to 120 minutes a day
- Years 10 and 11: 90 to 150 minutes a day

However, in 2012 these guidelines were scrapped and it is now up to each individual school to decide how much homework its students are set. If you have any concerns about the amount of homework your child is being given, then talk to the school about it. They may agree to either reduce or increase it.

So, does homework have any value? Very few students look forward to doing it and there are some disadvantages but, in my opinion, the pros of homework far outweigh the cons. Some say that homework impinges on family time and children's social lives but I disagree. (Chinese students do an average of 14 hours per week, while British ones are set just 5.)