

Homework

Homework has historically been given to students to reinforce what they learn at school, and ultimately to help them learn the material better. However, too much homework is not helpful, and can be counter-productive. Excessive amounts of time spent on completing homework can take away the kid's social life, family time, and it limits their participation in sports or other activities. The amount of homework a teacher has to give to a student should be restricted.

Critically acclaimed author, Tamim Ansary reports that since 1981, the amount of homework given to an average sixth class child has increased by more than fifty per cent. Many people claim that the increase in homework dates as far back as 1957. The new competition that emerged served as an incentive for schools to try to increase the volume of the curriculum. The amount of homework increases with the increase in class.

Many teachers defend large amounts of homework, claiming that it helps to prepare students for a world that is becoming increasingly competitive. However, Dr. Kralovec, author of 'The End of Homework', argues that doing homework during high school has little or no effect on successful study skills of the students when they join college.

Excessive amounts of homework can be harmful to kids both physically and mentally. A lot of homework usually means a lot of books to carry. Fifty-five percent of the Massachusetts (an institution in the U.S.A.) children, as per the survey by researchers of Simmons College, carry loads heavier than fifteen percent of their body weight,



which is the suggested limit. Carrying large amounts of weight daily at a young age can do a lot of damage because bones are still in development stage. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission has reported that in 1999, more than 800 kids were treated in emergency wards for backpack-related injuries.



Many of these injuries can lead to serious problems later in life including chronic shoulder, neck, and back pain.

The large amount of homework is causing kids in both high school and junior high school to be up until midnight or later. When extracurricular activities such as sports, clubs, etc are added to the picture, kids may even have to wake up early next morning to finish their homework, leaving them with an insufficient amount of sleep. Some parents and teachers argue that it would be beneficial to a child's academics to limit after school activities. However, cutting the time out of the few hours a week teenagers use for exercise, could be a factor in the growing obesity cases.

The number of children who are overweight has doubled in the last two to three decades; currently one child out of five is overweight. These children are faced with more problems in school. Instead of learning and concentrating on their work, many children are developing low self-esteem and even depression because of teasing. The cases of obesity are growing most certainly due to lack of physical exercise. With more and more homework being assigned, kids simply do not have enough time for proper amount of exercise.

Homework also takes away the time that a kid could be spending with his or her family. Rather than spending time bonding and building strong family relationships, parents and children argue over homework. Time is taken away from important aspects of daily life. This time is particularly precious in families with both the parents working. The time spent by such parents with their children is very limited. This time could be better spent going out to dinner as a family, or doing other activities that most families are not able to do because the kids don't have time to take a break from their homework schedule.

When assignments are given carelessly and frequently, it causes students to lose interest in the subject. Negative results can also occur when a student is not able to complete

his or her homework. Many times they will resort to copying the homework, having others do their assignments, or cheating in tests. Bad habits such as these are likely to haunt kids through their lives and have an adverse effect on their moral judgement. Students will, almost always take the easy way, when it comes to homework.

The use of homework is effective when used by the rule “less is more”. Overwhelming kids with loads of homework can cause them stress and possible physical injury. Homework takes away from the small amount of time kids get to spend with their parents and siblings. A limit on their physical and social activities can also take a large toll on their lives, and could hinder their health and future relationships.

This is not to say that homework should be abolished, but it should be limited. The homework should also be creative and interesting so that the child enjoys it.



Glossary

reinforce (<i>v</i>)	: make a feeling or an idea stronger
counter-productive (<i>adj</i>)	: having the opposite effect to the intended
excessive (<i>adj</i>)	: greater than what seems reasonable
dates (<i>v</i>)	: exists
curriculum (<i>n</i>)	: the subjects that are included in a course of study
obesity (<i>n</i>)	: the state of being very fat
precious (<i>adj</i>)	: valuable or important
overwhelming (<i>adj</i>)	: very great
toil (<i>n</i>)	: hard unpleasant work
hinder (<i>v</i>)	: to make it difficult for somebody to do something

I. Answer the following questions.

1. What is the main purpose of giving homework to children?
2. How can excessive homework decrease students' interest in studies?
3. Why do many teachers defend large amounts of homework?
4. How does homework take time away from important elements of daily life?
5. Is the writer in favour of or against homework? Support your answer.



Project Work

Conduct a survey to find out the kind of reading material the children like to be included in the textbook which makes the book more interesting.

Ask them which of the following they enjoy most and complete the table:

comics	poems
biographies	fairy tales
playlets	stories
skits	jokes
scientific essays	news reports
folklore	diaries
songs	magazines
essays	speeches

Work in groups and consolidate the data you have collected.

Collect the data in the given format.

Sl. No.	Name of the child	Material liked	Title
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

Prepare a pie chart with the collected data. Analyse the pie chart and name the materials they enjoyed reading.

Self Assessment

How well have I understood this unit?



Read and tick (✓) in the appropriate box.

Indicators	Yes	Somewhat	No
I read and understood the text:			
A. Swami Is Expelled from School			
B. Not Just a Teacher, but a Friend			
C. Homework			
I was able to pick out the synonyms for the words given under 'Vocabulary'.			
I was able to use the phrasal verbs in my own sentences given under 'Vocabulary'.			
I was able to transform the conversation into indirect speech given under 'Grammar'.			
I was able to replace 'so', 'that' and 'it' in the given passage with suitable noun clauses.			
I was able to write my reflections on 'Swami' in a paragraph.			
I was able to construct a narrative on 'Swami'.			
I was able to identify the differences between the two speeches given under 'Listening'.			
I was able to make a speech on Republic Day.			
I was able to write a paragraph based on the data given in the table under 'Study Skills'.			
I was able to prepare a pie chart on the reading material the children liked under 'Project Work'.			

Point of View

Pertains to who tells the story and how it is told. The point of view of a story can sometimes indirectly establish the author's intentions.

- **Narrator** - The person telling the story who may or may not be a character in the story.
- **First-person** - Narrator participates in action but sometimes has limited knowledge/vision.
- **Second person** - Narrator addresses the reader directly as though s/he is part of the story. (i.e. "You walk into your bedroom. You see clutter everywhere and...")