



Homework – A Guide for Pupils

Why do we set homework?

Homework is an essential part of making progress in any subject. Whether you are practising a newly acquired skill, refreshing your knowledge of material already taught, or undertaking independent learning, homework is an important part of achieving your academic potential.

Common sense ([and education research](#)) tells us that deliberate practice of key skills is critical to achieving success academically, as well as in sport, music and many other areas. Homework is a chance to undertake this practice.

When will teachers set homework?

You will receive a homework schedule at the start of each year. This shows the nights when teachers may choose to set homework. Teachers may not use every slot allocated to them, but they should only set work for their allocated days.

Teachers may set a big piece of work that spans several slots if they wish. For example, using two 20-minute slots to do a 40-minute homework.

How much homework am I supposed to do?

We aim to set homework that can be achieved in the following times:

- Years 7 and 8 – 20 minutes per homework
- Year 9 – 25 minutes per homework
- Year 10 – 30 minutes per homework
- Year 11 – 40 minutes per homework
- Sixth Form – as set by teachers

The total homework set should take up to:

- Y7 – 60 or 80 minutes per night (depending on the day)
- Y8 – 80 minutes per night
- Y9 – 100 minutes per night
- Y10 – 90 or 120 minutes per night (depending on the day)
- Y11 – 120 or 160 minutes per night (depending on the day)
- Sixth Form – as required

Where and how should I do my homework?

This is a really important question! The timings above only work if you undertake homework in a focused way. You cannot focus if your phone is pinging, the TV is on, or your games console is distracting you. So, you need to work in a quiet place

without distractions. Ask your parents or an older sibling to help you: give them your phone whilst you work, or your games controller or TV remote.

You also need to be organised. Make sure your homework is written in your planner. Some days you will receive more homework than others, so on busy days you may need to prioritise work that is due soonest. But try to attempt homework soon after it is set: leaving everything to the night before is stressful, and means you have no chance to ask your teacher for help if you need it.

How can I do all my homework if I have a sports practice or drama rehearsal?

Balancing homework and co-curricular activities can be a real challenge for busy pupils. The key is being organised. Write down all the work you have been set, and when it is due. You won't generally be set homework for the next day (see below for more on this) so you should be able to plan your way through clashes.

If you have an exceptional co-curricular load (for example, the final week of rehearsals for a play) ask your parents to contact your form tutor and relevant teachers in advance, so that they are aware and can be as flexible as possible.

There are times when it is really difficult to balance your homework with other evening and weekend commitments, but learning to manage your time is essential and is a key skill for you to develop during your time at school.

What if I just can't get my homework done in the time allocated?

Sometimes a homework will take slightly longer than the allocated time. This is normal, but you shouldn't regularly be taking much longer than the allocated time.

If you are spending much longer, check that you are working efficiently and without distractions (no phone, TV switched off etc).

If you are working efficiently, then check that you are working effectively: are you focusing on the most important part of the work, rather than investing time on small details? Teachers want to see work that is clear and tidy, but they don't want you to spend ages on beautiful diagrams or immaculate presentation (except for some work in Art or DT, where this may be the main focus).

If homework is still taking too long, ask your teacher or form tutor for help. Show them a piece of work that has taken too long so that you can get specific advice. It's hard to help someone who says "everything takes ages" but can't give examples.

If you get completely stuck on a piece of work, ask your parent to write a short note and sign it, explaining that you have spent the allocated time and haven't been able to get everything done on this occasion.

My homework is easy – it only takes a few minutes and I'd like more of a challenge!

Lucky you! Double check that you are doing everything needed, and to a good standard. If you are, let your teacher know and ask for suggestions on other ways to stretch your knowledge. Each subject has a document describing extension and enrichment opportunities. Your teacher may refer you to this, or suggest another idea that will interest you.

What about next day homework?

Teachers try to avoid next day homework, because they know this makes it harder for pupils to manage their time. In general, next day homework will only be set in maths, and only if your lessons fall in a particular pattern. Your teacher will tell you if they're going to need to do this.

I have exams soon, but my teacher has set homework, so I don't have time to revise!

Some pupils want to start revision well before tests or exams. This is admirable, but is often not the best way to spend time. Your teachers are experts in their subjects and preparing pupils for exam success. If they are setting homework rather than revision it is because they know it will bring you the most benefit. Trust them!

Are teachers allowed to set holiday homework?

Pupils in Year 11 and above may well receive extra work to do in the holidays, especially as they approach GCSEs and A-levels.

Pupils in younger Years should not get extra holiday work, but teachers may still set homework in the last week before the holidays, as they would in any other week.