

10 Homework How-Tos

to make the most of study time

Work through these practical how-tos with your child. Discuss, listen, and exchange ideas, then provide thoughtful parental guidance.

1. **Find the best time.** After school, after dinner... homework study should have a specific start and finish time. If your child finishes early, the remaining time can be used to double-check and review. Remember: it's best for your child to take a break from school before beginning homework.



2. **Find the best place to study.** Your child's homework headquarters should be away from television, stereo, telephone, and other distractions. A writing surface and good light are necessities. A small table near you may be the best place for a young student to study. A desk or table, even the floor, or a bed, may work for an older student.

3. **Be prepared.** Help your child gather all the materials needed to complete assignments. Pencils, sharpener, eraser, and paper for younger students, a pen, ruler, dictionary, thesaurus, graph paper, calculator and more may be necessary for older students.

4. **Make a homework list.** Have your child make an easy two-part homework checklist:

- ✓ List homework assignments in each class each day as they are made.
- ✓ Check over the list at the end of the school day to make sure you have all the materials necessary to take home.



5. **Keep a homework calendar.** Recording due dates for a major long-range assignment on a special homework calendar brings the task into focus. Have your child work backwards, identifying all the steps along the way to completion of the assignment.

- ✓ If a short paper is due on Friday, the last step is to write the final draft on Thursday.
- ✓ The first step is to begin reading and notetaking on Monday.

6. **Study rhythms.** Tackling the most difficult assignments when you are most alert and saving easier tasks for off-peak times, is a good idea for students of all ages. Some experts recommend doing math first. Do rough drafts of writing assignments early and put them aside. Then review them later in the study time for necessary revisions.

Suggest your child schedule several smaller segments of time for memorization. It is easier to learn in short stretches than at one long session. Also, try using an easier assignment as a break from something more difficult.

7. **If your child gets stuck...** Ask these questions...

- Have you read and followed directions carefully?
- Are you taking short cuts that are confusing you?
- Are you using your book properly?
- Read the directions aloud...now do they make sense?
- Have you tried making a picture, table, graph, or diagram to represent the known facts and relationships?
- Have you tried to solve a similar, but less difficult problem?
- Have you checked the glossaries, the table of contents for help?
- Did you copy the words or number correctly?



Still stuck? Suggest your child do other homework assignments for a while. Another option is to go to class early and check with the teacher or call a friend and ask for help. Remember...teachers want your child to succeed.



8. **Ask for help.** Let your child know it's ok to ask you for help. Say, "If you're not sure about the directions, try to figure them out. But if you can't, ask me." Let your child know that when extra drill is needed on U.S. capitals, multiplication tables, parts of speech, etc, you'll be happy to help.

9. **"Gimme a break..."** It's a good idea to schedule one or more short breaks in your child's study time. Stretching the mind for an hour, calls for stretching the body for a few minutes. Fifty jumping jacks, a game of ping pong, a few minutes on the trampoline, or a few minutes to play outside will bring a needed change of pace.

10. **Book bag at bedtime.** Help your child create a fail-proof method for getting completed homework assignments to school on time. A good slogan is "homework goes in the book bag at bedtime."

