

Wilson Area School District

Homework

Introduction

Because education is a lifelong process, which extends beyond the school, it is important that learning occurs in the home and community. Homework is one means of teaching the necessary skills of independent study and learning outside the school. A broad definition of homework is considered here to include not only written work, but also related activities which are related to classroom work, but which are assigned to be done outside of the classroom.

Current research indicates that the amount and quality of time students spend studying has a direct and positive impact on learning success. The Wilson Area School District believes that teachers should use homework assignments to foster positive, long-term, education-related behaviors and attitudes. Homework should have different purposes at different grades. For younger students, it should foster positive attitudes, habits, and character traits, reinforcing the learning of simple skills introduced in class. For older students, it should facilitate knowledge acquisition in specific topics. Additionally, homework should be assigned when it is clearly connected to skills learned and can demonstrate a connection to improving student achievement.

Reasons for Homework

Reasons for assigning homework may well differentiate by grade and age developmental level. All homework assigned should clearly be based upon a viable and understood purpose.

- To assist students in developing positive work and study habits and attitudes.
- To provide practice for reinforcement of learning that a student has acquired and must learn to master.
- Discovery and preparation for the subsequent lesson when this preparation can increase interest, motivation and impact significantly on student learning.
- To provide opportunity for students to be involved in research activities which would contribute to knowledge acquisition as well as provide opportunities to engage in higher order thinking activities.
- To enrich the learning experience and permit the student to demonstrate independent learning skills.

Types of Homework

The three basic types of homework are listed with a short explanation of each. Teachers are encouraged to utilize all three types depending on the needs of the student and the nature of the material being taught.

1. **Focused Practice**
This is given to provide students the opportunity to both practice an essential skill and to specifically reinforce previously learned skills that require retention for future skill attainment. The practice should strive to reinforce and improve retention of previously learned, essential skills that contribute to subsequent learning and standards attainment.
2. **Preparation**
These are assignments intended to permit the student to gain background information essential for subsequent learning. This is intended to enhance the depth of learning that can occur and to accelerate learning activities in the limited classroom time.
3. **Enhancement of Learning**
This provides students with opportunities through assignments to develop: independent work and learning skills, higher order thinking skills, the fostering of creativity and expression, research and reporting skills.

Guidelines for Teachers

Homework needs to have a purpose and specific focus related to learning, skill acquisition and mastery of a skill or knowledge. It should be assigned in amounts that diagnostically identify skills or knowledge to be learned as well as the developmental levels of individual students. Teacher-designed, rather than generic types of homework are recommended, as it will target the exact learning or skill to be attained.

Homework, if assigned, needs to be assessed with feedback to students providing reinforcement or re-direction for improved achievement. Quantity of homework should be considered to reflect what is necessary to meet the purpose for which it was designed. Homework should never be assigned as punishment or as a means to occupy student time or attention. Homework assigned to students requires effective communication for students with directions and expectations in clear and understandable form. Consideration should be given to balance the assignment of homework with the research relative to effective on-task attention spans of differentiated age levels. It is recommended that high school students combined homework should not exceed two hours per night. Homework for earlier grades should be adapted accordingly.

Guidelines for Parents

Parents can support a child's interest in lifelong learning by encouraging good study habits and providing a learning environment in the home.

- Provide a quiet, well-lit place for the student to do homework.
- Help your child budget time so that a regular schedule for study is set.
- Take an active interest in what your child is doing in school. Ask for an explanation of a particular assignment and what is being learned. Compliment good work or when improvement is shown. Make constructive suggestions but avoid severe criticism and undue pressure. A positive attitude by parents will encourage the student to do the best work possible.
- Encourage your child to seek additional help from the teacher at school if there seems to be any difficulty with the work
- Encourage and guide your child with assigned homework. Under no circumstances should you complete the assignment for your child.
- Regular school attendance is important for your child's continued learning. Absenteeism is not a valid excuse for not fulfilling homework requirements.
- Communicate with the teacher any concerns you have about your child's work habits and academic growth.
- Encourage your child to form the habit of writing homework assignments in a notebook or agenda book. Periodically check to see if your child is developing and maintaining this sound educational habit.

Guidelines for Students

- Keep a record of homework assignments in a notebook or agenda book as soon as the assignments are given.
- Ask the teacher to clarify assignments that are not clear to you.
- Be responsible for your own work; complete assignments on time; and hand assignments in when they are due.
- Establish a regular time each day to do your homework in a comfortable, well-lit area equipped with all the necessary materials.
- Do your own work and the best you can at all times.
- Make effective use of study hall time.
- Set a limit on co-curricular activities if they interfere with your academic growth.
- When not in attendance, you are responsible for any missed assignments.
- It is urgent that if you are having problems learning in school, discuss the problems with your parents, teachers, or other school officials.