



Teachers should not be allowed to assign students homework.

Part 1: Understanding the Topic

Context

Homework. Love it or hate it, it’s a big part of most students’ lives – but does it have to be this way? Recently, many school administrators have been rethinking their homework policies – forbidding it on certain days, making it optional, or banning homework entirely. Fans of homework say that it’s a valuable tool for learning while opponents highlight the fact that it’s a common source of stress. In this debate, the question at hand is: do the benefits of homework outweigh the harms?

To clarify, banning homework does not mean getting rid of tests and grades altogether, but only that homework will not count towards your grade in class. Students will likely still need to study before exams if they want to do well, but any work done outside of class time would strictly be optional.

Definitions

- Students: All students from elementary, middle, and high school.
- Homework: Work assigned to be completed after class, such as essays, projects, worksheets, and reading.

Part 2: Building Arguments

Guiding Questions

1. What are the main differences between classwork and homework?
2. What types of homework do teachers usually assign? How effective is each at helping students learn?
3. What would students do instead if they had no homework?
4. How does homework affect teachers? How does homework affect parents?

PRO	CON
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does homework make students feel more stressed than classwork? Why is this important? • Why is homework a less effective way to learn compared to classwork? • How does homework make learning in class less effective? • How could homework detract from the teacher’s ability to teach effectively? • Why is completing homework more difficult for some students, such as those whose parents work late and can’t help them, than others? Why is this important? • Why is homework a bad way to prepare young students for university and jobs? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is it possible to reduce stress by making rules about how much homework teachers can assign? • Why is it important for students to learn how to manage stress? • Why is homework an effective learning tool? How does it help students learn more effectively in class? • How does homework allow parents and teachers to check student progress more effectively? • How does homework prepare students for university and jobs? Why is this important?



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Part 3: Extended Learning

Additional Vocabulary

- **Student achievement:** Refers to how well students are doing in school. Also referred to as *academic performance*, *educational outcomes*, etc.
- **Mental health:** Psychological and emotional wellbeing. The most common mental health disorders among students are depression and anxiety.
- **Psychologist:** A scientist who studies human behavior and the brain.
- **Social inequality:** The existence of unequal opportunities for people of different social statuses. For example, students that come from low-income families might not have access to the same resources as their wealthier classmates.
- **Primary school:** Elementary and middle school, kindergarten through Grade 8
- **Secondary school:** High school, Grade 9 to 12

News Blast

- In 2012, President Françoise Hollande of France proposed banning homework for all primary and middle school students.
To learn more, search [Françoise Hollande homework ban].
- In 2018, a number of school districts across the US instituted homework bans, including Ridgefield Public Schools in Connecticut and Lafayette Parish School System in Louisiana.
To learn more, search [US school district homework bans]
- Harris Cooper, professor of psychology at Duke University, found that homework has a positive effect on student achievement, but that the effects are much stronger for secondary students than those in elementary school.
To learn more, search [Harris Cooper homework research]