

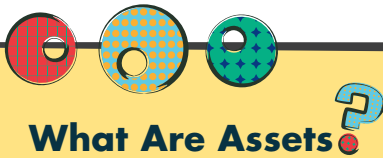


IDEAS for Educators

42 Ready-to-Use Newsletters for School Success

23. HOMEWORK

Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.



What Are Assets?

Assets are 40 values, experiences, and qualities that help kids succeed.

Homework is one of five commitment-to-learning assets.

47% of youth surveyed have this asset in their lives.*

*Based on Search Institute surveys of 148,189 6th- to 12th-grade youth throughout the United States in 2003.

- Define what is necessary about the homework.
- Remember that nightly homework is good, but try not to overload kids on a regular basis.
- Provide a range of activities to ensure greater participation.

Making Homework Appealing

Homework can be both the saving grace and the great ruination of a student's life. For most, homework serves to give them a chance to practice skills learned in class and demonstrate their capabilities. As students progress in their schooling, homework must be balanced with work, sports, activities, and

other responsibilities that often threaten to take over. In order for students to not only do homework, but also be *willing* to do it, a teacher needs to carefully consider what it is he is asking them to do.

The first thing to consider is the essential function of the homework. Make the expected outcome clear to the students. Without any idea of why they are being asked to jump through certain hoops, they may reasonably refuse.

Next, consider the means by which a student must complete their work. If the student needs to practice a new skill, exercises are typically best. But if a student is being asked to simply demonstrate retention of information, perhaps a set of creative assignments would be better:

- If a student is preparing for a test, engage him on multiple levels. Create review games, mnemonic songs, huge flash cards, and other fun ways to review.
- Research and implement some basic learning-styles methods into your homework assignments.



- ⦿ Allow auditory learners to submit certain homework assignments as spoken-word assignments.
- ⦿ Allow kinesthetic learners to demonstrate understanding by acting out scenes that incorporate information learned.

In addition, think about options that let students integrate their passions into the lessons. Is it absolutely necessary that they read only a specific short story to understand symbolism? Maybe they can watch a movie or read a poem instead. Can't a budding sportsman calculate trajectory by studying basketball shots or golf shots?

Home Work

Homework. For students, that word conjures up notions of essays, projects, and worksheets. But for you, it's a word that takes on a different tone: it's work you do at home. And you may do a lot of it.

For this week, keep a log of what kind of time you're spending at home on work and what the work entails. That way you can get a handle on how much time you're spending at home doing work. Then think about these questions:

- ⦿ What is happening with my family and friends while I'm working at home?
- ⦿ What time do I have left for myself to re-energize and relax?
- ⦿ How could I reprioritize my time to get this work done differently?

And to those questions, you might want to add this one:

- ⦿ If I *don't* change anything about how I'm spending my time at home, what are the long-term implications for my health, well-being, and job satisfaction?

These reflections might give you some new ideas. If so, share your new thinking with the people in your life and ask them to help you create new boundaries. The end results? Less stress. Healthier relationships with others. Increased job satisfaction. And a home that feels like a home.

