

Homework

How much help should you give to your children?

Context

Many parents see a clear link between academic achievement and career success. Combined with work being more competitive, should children be given a much homework as possible to prepare them for their future?

If students find that they are unable to complete their homework, would be it a good idea to for them to get help to complete their work? Would that defeat the purpose of homework?

Surely the main object of homework is for the teacher to gauge how much the child has understood in class. If the parent does the work for the child or 'helps' too much, it is to the detriment of that child. The teacher will assume that the pupil has fully understood the work.

Rosemary, England

As a sixth form student myself, I see nothing wrong with any parent being concerned enough to seek further information in order to help their child. If it helps Euan and his classmates to learn more about the world in which we live, then fair play to them.

Anthony Evershed, Beds, UK

Those who say "leave children to do homework by themselves" clearly do not have children in the UK educational system. I have one boy at primary school, and one at secondary school. Both schools actively encourage the involvement of parents in all aspects of students' homework. The aim, after all, is for our children to learn as much as possible from the tasks they are set. I would go so far as to say that any parent who does not provide as much assistance as possible during homework is failing in their responsibility to their children.

John L, UK

Would you consider it an unfair advantage if, one day, I help my daughter with her French homework? I would find it very silly not to help her!

Pascal Jacquemain, UK (French)

One of the reasons such projects are set are that students learn how to research, to find the sources and make the requests in order to get the information.

Meg, UK

I don't personally see anything wrong with it. It is simply using people with whom you have connections in order to give yourself an advantage over others which anyone does if they have any sense.

Simon Moore, UK

Why not help with homework? We help our sons so that they learn how to find information from a variety of sources. There's nothing elitist about it. It's simply lending a hand. Homework is a necessary part of their academic learning. Why not give a hand if you have the time and patience?

Julia, Australia

It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that the child gets as much out of homework as possible. You should not give your child the answer. Instead they obtained public information for him to learn from and use. This information is in the public domain and available to any parent. Getting someone to do his homework would have been wrong but not giving a lad the chance to learn as much as possible.

Richard, UK

When I once asked my father to help me with my homework, he replied, "Sure - if you help me with my tax return." Needless to say I learned to fend on my own

Robert del Valle, USA

The only times that my parents have helped me with homework/coursework is to check through the final article to see if it sounds right. I am dyslexic and I may miss words like they, has etc.

Helen, UK

It's wrong to think that the education system provides enough support to get your children a good education. Parents must play an active role in their children's education. Any self-respecting parent would have done exactly the same in Mrs Blair's position. Good for her.

Shaun Ridler, UK

There is no proper parent in this country that would not use every means at their disposal to help their child with their homework. Part of the secret of success in life is, not necessarily knowing all the answers, but knowing where to find them.

Colin Mackay, UK

Parental involvement with homework should be minimal. Every now and then a child may need a little help getting through a sticky algebra problem, and conversing about the literary merits of a current reading assignment may be helpful and provide a little insight, but for the most part, homework should be done by the student. As much as we want to see our children succeed, there are some things they have to handle themselves.

Faye, USA

I help my kids with homework, as much as I can that is. My two girls are nine and eight respectively and already get more homework than I was given as a teenager. If they have a problem, my wife or I will work through it with them step by step, being careful not to give the answer, as that defeats the object of it. As well as being a bonding exercise for us, it keeps us in touch with what they are learning at school. And, last but not least, it also stimulates my own mind about things that I had long forgotten.

Jack Burge, UK

I work for a local authority in an environmental field and from time to time receive requests from students seeking help. I'm only too happy to give it -they don't have to be the son of the Prime Minister. It doesn't take many minutes, enables the student to have a better understanding of important issues and may encourage them to take an interest further, perhaps in their own career. At a time when teachers insist that they are pushed to the limits, why should the rest of us not take a more proactive role with the next generation's education? It's called citizenship.

Julie, UK

I don't get it, what's the fuss about? When I was at school, I had various projects from time to time, so I contacted (amongst others) the Vietnamese Embassy, the Home Office, British Airways, Friends of the Earth and the AA, all of which couldn't stop themselves falling over to help me. What's wrong with contacting the Ministry of Defence for help with a debate about the politics surrounding nuclear weapons? The only question here is why all the other children and parents didn't think of doing exactly the same thing.

Alex Banks, UK, living in Ireland