

A Parents' Guide to Homework

A subject specific guide on how parents can best support this aspect of their child's education



'Education is not received. It is achieved.'

**Albert
Einstein'**

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Introduction

This booklet has been put together by teachers at APHS to help parents at home support their child with homework

Why is homework set?

Homework has many positive effects on students learning:

- Raising achievement across all subjects
- Developing as lifelong independent learners
- Developing study and work routines
- Building positive links between school and home

What types of homework are set?

Homework may be *shorter tasks* which should be completed in less than an hour and have a short deadline. Homework may also be *longer tasks* that take several hours and have longer deadlines. Students are supported in these longer tasks. In years 9, 10 & 11 tasks include vital preparation for controlled assessments and preparation for examinations. Homework tasks are varied, but always serve to either consolidate or develop learning in lessons or to prepare for a future lesson.

For example, students may be asked to do any of the following:

- Research content to be covered in a future lesson
- Produce written answers to questions or other assignments
- Prepare presentations or speeches
- Prepare for a test or other assessment
- Self - assess some work they have produced in class
- Comment or act on written feedback they have been given

How much homework is set?

In order for homework to be as relevant as possible to class activities, there is no formal homework timetable. However on average, subject teachers set a homework task every other lesson and give reasonable deadlines. This allows for assessment of learning and allows students to manage their workload.

Years 7 and 8 tasks should take on average 30 minutes to complete

Years 9, 10 and 11 tasks should take on average up to an hour to complete

What support is available in school?

- If your child does not understand a homework task they should find the subject teacher and ask for further guidance. Teachers at APHS willingly give up their time to support students in this way. It is the student's responsibility to find the teacher in good time before the deadline to ensure that the task can be completed.
- Homework Club runs every lunch time 12.15-12.50pm and after school Monday to Thursday 3-3.30pm in Becketts. Students have access to resources and can receive assistance from teachers and Teaching Assistants. Homework Club is open to all students who wish to work on any homework task. Alongside this there is also a literacy and numeracy boost club for SEN students Monday to Thursday 3-4pm.

SAM Learning

Is an online education resource that supports personalised learning through a Self-Assessment Method (SAM) of interactive revision and examination practice. The service covers all National Curriculum subject areas across all Key Stages. Content on the site is written by examiners and teachers. There are many subjects to choose from and it helps children learn quickly from their mistakes. All students have their own student password and login.

What happens if homework is not done?

Homework is compulsory and all students are expected to complete tasks to a good standard and meet deadlines. If homework is not completed on time, on occasions a short extension may be granted at the teacher's discretion. Detentions are set if homework is not completed. Students who consistently fail to complete homework are also placed on Report.

*The key is to making the homework
'Purposeful and challenging for all learners'*

General guidelines:

- 1) Establish a clear routine for completing homework, e.g. a clear location to complete it, such as a homework corner/table not in their bedroom. May decide on the best location following a parent and child discussion.
- 2) Offer rewards for successful completing homework e.g. One hour of Xbox or cook their favourite meal for the next evening.
- 3) Decide on a set time to complete homework e.g. 7-8pm

- 4) Design a homework schedule/timetable which might set aside certain subjects for certain days.
- 5) Include a break in the homework time, which may feature a small reward to encourage them to keep going e.g. cup of tea with two biscuits.
- 6) Develop a sanction system if homework deadlines are not being met. e.g. No Playstation at the weekend.
- 7) Provide support if needed, however a discussion between class teacher and parent about the homework may be more suitable.

English

Homework will be set by each teacher weekly; this may vary according to where they have got up to in a lesson, so there is not a set day for this. Homework tasks are always to be written in their planner. Challenge your child to ensure they know what the task is; quite often they tend to write 'English due', without the task. This then causes issues as they forget what the task was.

KS3 will be provided with homework booklets each half term. This is to avoid books being left at home and pupils then needing new exercise books. This can often result in the loss of many months of work.

KS4 will be expected to do their homework in their exercise books.

- We greatly appreciate home taking an interest in homework. We openly encourage home to become involved in the sharing of ideas to inspire homework, encourage creativity and depth to the written work, being thorough with the work given and checking the presentation.
- Please don't do your child's work for them; this doesn't help either your child or us. We need to be able to assess their efforts, praise them on their knowledge and ability and guide them on how to improve their work, as well as check for the mistakes.
- If your child does not understand the work set, please encourage them to see their teacher before the deadline; this will enable the teacher to talk your child through the homework to ensure they are able to complete it. There is an 'English Hub' in Room 7 every Thursday, from 12.30 to 1pm, where pupils from any year group can seek advice or guidance with any aspect of English, including homework. This is open to all year groups.
- Effort is key to your child's homework. Please encourage them to ensure they have checked their homework for spellings, grammar, punctuation, paragraphing and presentation. All of these demonstrate they have tried. Encourage them to use a wide, varied vocabulary.
- Reading is paramount to all English work. Due to the changes in the new English specifications, it has never been as important as it is now to ensure your child reads regularly. Openly

encouraging discussion on articles that are in the home, whether they are in a magazine, newspaper or book, will develop your child's word power, ability to summarise and understand inferred meaning. If there is one topic that can be done at home daily, it is reading.

- Due dates are given to students for a reason; please ensure they keep to these. This booklet details the consequences of homework not being done on time.

Some pupils enjoy the challenge of homework. Some feel they need extra work at home to help embed their understanding of work in the class. If your child feels they need extra support for either of these, please encourage them to see their teacher who will be happy to choose appropriate activities to further enhance their learning in the classroom.

French and Spanish

Language learning strategies are specific to Modern Foreign Languages, and will help tackle some of the difficulties that may be encountered.

- Use flash cards to help memorise vocabulary. It will be useful to add pictures, colours and anything else that aids memory. Putting the English on one side and the foreign language on the other enables students to test both their passive skills (listening, reading) and their active skills (speaking and writing).
- Colour-coding grammatical devices will help the student to remember: using different colours to distinguish between masculine and feminine nouns and using other colours to represent different parts of speech. This can also work with post-it notes.
- Allowing the student to record themselves and then play it back is a good way of improving both vocabulary and pronunciation; the student will be able to judge whether they sound accurate and vocabulary will be reinforced at the same time.
- To help with remembering word order, put the words onto card, cut up the card into separate phrases, mix them up and practice putting them back together again.
- Use multi-sensory learning in order to remember vocabulary: reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
- If pronunciation is a source of difficulty, ask the teacher to record some of the words onto an MP3 file, mobile phone or tablet so that practice at home is possible.
- If listening is difficult, ask the teacher to record some practice exercises that can be practised at home.
- Many people find it easier to remember a word if they associate it with a visual image or picture. Try putting pictures next to the words, and the picture may be recalled faster than the actual word.
- Don't forget the tried and trusted methods of 'look, cover, write, check' and 'look, cover, say, check' – they are used extensively to learn English vocabulary and work just as well with Modern Foreign Languages.

To learn new vocabulary, it is more effective to use short and frequent sessions with short lists.

- 1) Break down your list of words into more manageable mini lists of 4 to 5 words. They can be written on a folded piece of paper, a card, or anything portable.

- 2) It is better to study the lists of words a couple of times a day, every day. These sessions should be no more than fifteen minutes long.
- 3) Words can be associated with pictures – create flashcards, label items in the house, use post-it-notes (visual learner). Words can also be associated with a sound, or a song, or a piece of music. Some pupils find it easier to create a song with the words they are learning (auditory learner). Words can also be association with a gesture or a mime (kinesthetic learner).

Geography

Developing skills

Place Geography

- Invest in a map of the world or a globe and locate places that you have links with e.g. friends, family and holidays.
- If you make a journey use road atlases and maps to plan your route rather than relying on the Sat Nav! You could also record times and distance travelled to help develop an understanding of scale.
- Encourage students be aware of local, national and international news and current affairs and find out where these events are taking place.

Geographical enquiry

Discuss and ask questions about what you see and what is around you:

- What is happening?
- Why?
- Who is involved/affected?
- Is this normal?

Books, the Library and the internet can all help answer these questions.

Taking pictures, sketching what you see or jotting down things you want to ask and bringing these into school is also a good way to encourage students learn about the world around them.

History

- All homework should be recorded in the student planner with a deadline.
- All homework should be completed to the best of your child's ability.
- For Key stage 3, each homework task should take at least 30 minutes.
- For Key Stage 4, each homework task should take at least 60 minutes.
- There will never be a time that Key Stage 4 students do not have any history homework!
- All work should be written in the students own words (do not use the copy and paste function!!!).
- Written work should have an underlined date and title.
- Written work should be in full sentences (Tip - sentences do not start with "because"!).
- Encourage your child to complete the homework in plenty of time so that if they have a problem they can see their History teacher so that they can get help.
- Useful website: This contains links to several history sites which are really useful.
<http://www.helpfulhistory.com/links.html>

Religious Studies

- Every unit has a key set of about 12 words - all years.
- Help available at lunch times in room 9.
- Nearly all work is linked to contemporary issues so please discuss news.
- To get to level 5 one criteria is work from personal study. (Do research; don't just rely on class notes)
- Use quotes and examples from the real world is essential.
- GCSE students have one homework page a week. If done within three/four days it normally takes only 20 minutes to do properly. If it is left for a number of weeks the information is much slower to recover.
- I stay after school Wednesday nights for homework help. (3.15-4.15pm juice and biscuit available)

Art

- Do not leave your creations until the last minute.
- Make a sketched plan of your work first. Use the library and internet for research.
- Borrowing relevant equipment from the Art Dept is welcomed but having your own small stock at home is really useful.
- Students should try to keep these things in their pencil case and at home to aid good homework:
- A shading pencil e.g. 2B for adding tonal qualities and an eraser.
- A black fine liner for adding outlines, tone and depth.
- A pritt stick for collage. Collect colour magazines too.
- A small water colour/ cheap set of acrylic tubes for painting/ colour notes
- Some plain white paper at hand would be good.
- Although all equipment may be borrowed from school.
- Any local exhibitions are well worth visiting and recording. Sketching and photography can be included in coursework especially at GCSE level although encouraged earlier.

ICT / Computer science

- Ensure students are not copying and pasting huge chunks of text, but using it to write their own answer.
- Ensure students understand any technical language used on the site and explained it if need be.
- Ensure students are practiced at using Google drive and email.
- As a lot of work is on the computer and online ensure students are not distracted by non-school work activities e.g. YouTube.

Resistant Materials

To ensure research preparation tasks are being completed before the lesson.

Food Technology

- To practice general kitchen skills such as preparing vegetables, peeling and chopping, helping to organise the ingredients for a meal and washing up.
- To practice the cooking skills covered during the lessons to increase confidence.

Performing Arts

The performing arts are a specialist group of subjects that develop students' practical skills while gaining a critical evaluation of the world around them.

Homework is set to support and evaluate the learning taking place in the classroom, develop the skills required for the examination units and to further ignite a love of the subject.

It is strongly advised that you support your child to take part in as many extracurricular activities on offer at school and visit local bands, plays, concerts and musicals. This will help to broaden and deepen their experience of the performing arts that ultimately will support their achievement in the classroom.

Drama

KS3

The Drama curriculum covers an extensive range of subjects which effectively combine the development of performance skills with the teaching of social and key skills – communication and working with others.

For this reason homework is not formally set every lesson, but only when it is thought that an observation or reflection during the interim will allow for greater understanding and awareness.

Students should expect to receive one piece once every half term from drama to either consolidate work in class or to evaluate theirs and practice others, which reflects classroom learning.

This written work will go towards their final level which is revaluated each term.

- Other homework tasks may also include:
 - learning drama vocabulary
 - researching lesson topics and themes
 - to produce script work
 - to show commitment by carrying out preparation for the next lesson e.g. learn lines, bringing in props.

KS4:

Drama homework will often consist of reflection write ups to be completed in preparation for GCSE controlled assessments. It is crucial that this is completed as soon as possible as the workshop will still be fresh in the mind of the student.

- In the reflections of workshops, the student:
 - Recalls what they did in their workshop
 - Lists any explorative strategies used
 - Describes how the explorative strategy/drama medium helped them to understand the stimulus/script further
 - Describes specific examples of what they did well and what others did well within ideas and performance
 - Evaluates how these ideas can be used in the future to help with their Unit 3 performance
- Students are also encouraged to watch as much live theatre as possible in addition to school trips.

Music

Music homework will fall into 4 categories:

Performance:

Students will be preparing for a solo or group performance, therefore encourage them and express the importance of practicing their individual instrument regularly to develop their technical skills.

Composition:

Students will be creating new ideas using their instruments, writing down any ideas they have to bring them into lessons. Ask them to play their ideas, and always give positive feedback or ask them to explain why/how they have come up with the idea.

Listening:

Students will be asked to listen to a particular composer, style of music or a range of musical and answer specific questions or give a personal opinion on the music. Ask them to talk to you about all types of music, describing the style, the instruments that they can hear and the structure.

Analysing:

Students will be asked to write an essay style response to questions set about a particular piece of music from the GCSE syllabus. This will follow the same guidance as subjects such as History and English – Make the point, give the example, explain why it is important/what effect it has on the listener.

- Encourage your child to listen to all of the set works so that they are familiar with the main themes, ideas and instruments
- Transfer the set works CD onto their phone, MP3 player or make sure that they have the use of a CD player to support their listening development
- Use the DRSMITH template to discuss music of all genres
- Ask your child to describe the music:
 - what instruments can they hear?
 - What style of music is it?
 - Do they like it?
 - Give musical reasons why
- Listen to music together and share lots of different styles and your favourites too! Encourage them to talk about what they can hear.
- Give students time to revise and challenge them to study one set area at a time Students need to read their answers carefully, so support them by encouraging reading at home.
- Use the GCSE Music Revision guide to test them on their knowledge.
- Use the Music Revision guide to ask your child to talk you about the music while listening to the set work.

Mathematics

Parental Support Matters

- We know that parental support has a major impact upon how well children do at school. Parents are keen to help their children but may be unsure about the best way to do this. Some worry that by helping they may contradict or undermine methods that children have been shown in class.
- **We appreciate any form of parental support** – parents taking an interest in their children’s work helps reinforce the partnership that should exist between home and school.
- Here are some practical steps that parents can take to ensure their child is prepared for their maths lessons.
- Check that your child has a quality scientific calculator and a complete geometry set. We recommend the Casio FX series. Calculators and geometry sets are available to purchase from the school library (LRC) at very competitive prices.
- Homework in maths is often set half-termly. However, students should still record weekly in their planner what it is they are expected to do. Finding a quiet time in a quiet place away from televisions, video games, music and mobile phones will help students’ complete homework well. Additionally;
- As a school we subscribe to the excellent mathematics website www.mymaths.co.uk Using the login **peel** and the password **radius**, students have access to high quality explanatory and practice material. We use this site to provide homework for students in Years 7 through to 9. Homework is set at the beginning of each half-term and matches as best we can the work that students will cover during that half-term. This site also has special **booster sections** to help GCSE students in Years 10 and 11 move from D to C, C to B and A to A*, and is **free to all students at this school**.
- We also subscribe to the marvelous website www.mathswatchvle.com This **is simply superb** in offering students explanation, advice and practice on **all** of the topics they will meet at from level 3 work at Key Stage 3 through to A* material at GCSE.

We highly recommend that students log on to this website on a regular basis.

Finally, it is perhaps worth stating an obvious and old-fashioned fact. Success is linked directly to the amount of **time and effort that students put into revising at home**.

There is no short-cut to success.

Physical Education

- Encourage the use of the purple Revision Workbook and purple Practice Papers booklets to improve exam technique and support the completion of various revision tasks.
- Encourage the use of SAM Learning, GCSE Bitesize and Teach PE websites, to apply knowledge and understanding for the topic of their choice.
- Check your child's exercise book to ensure they are responding to Teacher feedback and making the necessary corrections and changes that have been asked by the member of the PE department.
- Practice verbally interviewing your child by asking them the Analysis of Performance questions leading up to Moderation Day. Analysis of Performance is always assessed orally.
- Encourage the use of the GCSE PE purple Revision Guide to read further around each topic and highlight key points which expand their knowledge.
- Look at the extra -curricular sports club timetable to identify which clubs their child can attend in order to increase their practical performance, which is worth 60% of the course.
- Encourage the watching of sports on TV to develop analysing, evaluating and comparison skills. This will also provide opportunities to link the theoretical aspects of the course to the sports on TV; e.g. identify what components of fitness are required to play that sport to a high level.

Science

- Remember to write in pen and draw diagrams and graphs in pencil.
- Read all instructions and information before looking at Qu 1. (Lots of science questions contain clues and information that is useful within the blurb before a question)
- Before writing anything think about what you know about any of the key words. For example what do the key words mean? Look up any you do not know. Now re-read question.
- Graphs must cover 2/3 of the graph paper, have labelled axes with the units in brackets. E.g. 'temperature of water ($^{\circ}\text{C}$)'
- What is the command word in the question? Underline it.
- Common command words
 - **Describe** say what you see
 - **Explain** tell me why?
 - **Compare** give positives and negatives of 2 things
 - **Evaluate** compare then say which is best
- Make sure you do what the **command word** says.
- Read your answer to someone else, this helps with picking up grammar and sentence structure mistakes.
- Try to explain your answer to someone else. This will strengthen your understanding of the subject area. Allow the person listening to ask you questions. If you can make someone who wasn't in your lesson understand what you have learnt, you have solidified your knowledge.