

PARENT TEACHING TIPS

. . . on Time Management for School Homework Assignments

By Bill Welker, EdD

As we near the beginning of a new school year, I feel a strong need to discuss the significance of homework. There is nothing that irritates a teacher more than students who procrastinate completing their homework assignments.

Throughout the remainder of this column, I will offer ideas for doing homework. I am writing it specifically for students; therefore, it is imperative that parents share this important information with their school-aged children. Now let's begin with the following athletic analogy.

Coaches, first and foremost, want all their players to gain positive experiences from athletics. To accomplish this goal, the participants need to be as committed as their coaches. A major part of that dedication includes hours upon hours of drills. Although the majority of athletes hate drill work, they know that to be successful in their sport, it is a very necessary evil. As with athletics, the same is true with academic efforts. But in the case of studies, it is known as that dreaded activity referred to as "homework."

The key to proper homework preparation is "time management." Many students do not know how to wisely organize their daily studying routine. Hence, homework is either turned in late or never complete. Furthermore, such problems can lead to student anxiety and feelings of always being in a rush.

What I want to share with you from this point on are some helpful hints for homework. Likewise, I also devised a generic time schedule for "after school" study habits.

Helpful Homework Hints

- 1. Try to eliminate dead hours. Accomplish something every free moment of the day. Research has demonstrated that an hour of daytime study is worth an hour and a half of studying at night.**
- 2. Always allow enough time to eat good, nutritious meals. As they say, “You are what you eat.”**
- 3. Do not follow a schedule that could cause lack of proper sleep. All evidence supports the importance of acquiring the basic eight hours of sleep a day.**
- 4. Determine how much time you really need to study each subject area, and develop your homework schedule accordingly.**
- 5. When you are faced with lengthy homework projects, double the time you think it will take and start early. Keep in mind, big assignments always take longer than you originally expected.**
- 6. During the day, look for small blocks of time in which you can get minor tasks accomplished. For example, if you take a school bus to and from school, you could be reading a chapter in one of your textbooks at these times.**
- 7. Always schedule your most difficult homework during a time of the day when you feel totally alert. This time will vary from student to student.**
- 8. When studying at home, select a homework site with no distractions. You can’t learn when the television is on or family members are having discussions near your study area.**

Generic Time Schedule for After School Hours

- 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. – Recreational or Sports Practice Time.**

- **5:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. – Chore Time, etc.**
- **6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. – Evening Meal.**
- **7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. – Homework Time. (Note: Allow 10 minutes of each hour for a study break.)**
- **9:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. – Recreational Time for Watching Television, Calling or Texting Friends, etc.**
- **10:00 p.m. – Bedtime**

To be quite honest, at first you can anticipate having some difficulty putting together a daily time schedule for homework and other activities. Here is where parents can assist their child, having more lifetime experiences in organizing their personal and professional affairs. Moreover, please realize that your child's schedule may need to be revised or adjusted from time to time.

I have one final tip for students who take their schooling seriously. Even if you are not sure how to complete a homework assignment for a certain class, always hand something in when it's due – be it right or wrong. Believe me, this is very sound advice from my own educational experiences.

With the above approach to studying, all your teachers will realize that you have made sincere efforts to perform homework assignments. Likewise, should a completed homework paper be incorrect, your teacher will know where you are having learning problems. Thus, your teacher will be able to guide you toward better understanding of the material being taught.

On the other hand, when students fail to hand in homework assignments, their teachers will think they don't care, and nothing can be learned by anyone. Hence, the bottom line is: Do Your Homework!

Parent Proverb

Talent is God-given; be humble.

Fame is Man-given; be grateful.

Conceit is Self-given; be careful!

- John Wooden

(Editor's Note: Dr. Bill Welker is a retired reading specialist who was a K-12 classroom teacher for 40 years. He was selected as a "Teacher of the Year" by the Wheeling Area Chamber of Commerce. Most recently, Dr. Welker was inducted into the West Virginia University College of Education and Human Services' *Jasper N. Deahl Honors Society* for career achievement and community involvement. His e-mail is mattalkwv@hotmail.com.)