

Homework 101

High school means more classes to juggle—and more homework assignments to manage. Help your teen be successful in school by getting into a good homework routine and sticking with it. The result will be better grades and stronger time-management and organizational skills to carry throughout her life. Here are suggestions.



Stay organized

In high school, your child has lots of books and papers to keep straight, so she needs good organizational skills. Encourage her to use her student planner or to take advantage of tools on her school website. This will help her to keep track of homework due dates, quizzes, tests, and meetings for group projects. She can check her planner at the end of the school day so she'll know what she needs to bring home for each assignment. *Tip:* Using a different-colored folder or binder for every subject can make it easy for her to find what she needs.

Get focused

Suggest that your teen try working under various conditions. Some students work better in silence, others with background

music. He might prefer to sit at a desk, spread his work out on the kitchen table or on his bed, or lie on the family room floor. Being comfortable with his work environment will allow him to concentrate on his assignments.



Establish a routine

Have your high schooler pick a homework time slot that works for her. It could be when she gets home from school or sports practice, or it might be right after dinner. Let her experiment to find the best time and then stick with it. *Tip:* If she has no assignments due the next day, she could use the time to review notes or textbook chapters for a test or to work on a long-term project.

Manage assignments

Your child's workload might be easier to handle if he starts homework time by putting his assignments in order. Some students do better knocking out the easiest assignment first and feeling they have accomplished something. Others succeed by tackling the hardest work first, when they are the most alert. Have your teen try both ways to see which works better for him.

Create study guides

Worksheets, textbook questions, and other assignments contain information your child will need to know for tests. She can stay ahead of the game by making study guides as she does her homework instead of waiting until just before an exam to study. While working on history, for instance, she might keep a running time line that shows dates of important events like battles or presidential elections. Suggest that she save her study guides in a binder or computer folder.



continued



Plan for projects

Encourage your teen to tackle a large project by breaking it down into individual steps. For a research project, tasks might include choosing a topic, finding source material, taking notes, writing the paper, making visual aids for a presentation, and practicing the oral report. He could stagger the steps over several weeks in his planner or on a calendar. The project will get done on time—and it won't seem as overwhelming.

Build in breaks

Your high schooler can avoid homework burnout by taking regular breaks. She might spend 45 minutes writing up a science lab and then stop for a 10-minute break before studying for her math quiz, for example. She'll get a chance to step away

from her assignments while she walks around the block, strums her guitar, or eats a healthy snack. And clearing her head can help her feel refreshed when she sits back down to work.

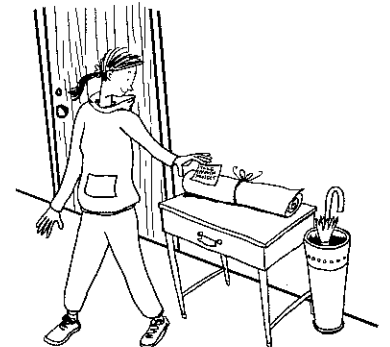
Be creative

Finding creative ways to complete assignments can add some fun to homework time. For instance, instead of using flash cards, your child might replace the cards in a game of Trivial Pursuit with questions from his history textbook. Then, he can play the game with friends (or you) to study for his test. Or if he's allowed to approach an English essay any way he wants, he could turn a comparison of two books into an email exchange among characters.

Turn it in

Homework is not complete until it's handed in! Suggest that your teen develop a routine for getting assignments to school and turning them in on the day they're due.

While she does homework, she could keep everything in her backpack except the assignment she's working on. When she finishes, and before starting the next task, she should put the completed work in her bag. If it's big (a poster or a model that she built), she might put it by the front door. Or she could set an alert on her phone to go off in the morning or tape a sign to the inside of the front door that says, "Take Spanish project!"



"Help! I'm stuck!"

When your high schooler asks you for help with homework, what should you do? Instead of finding the answer for him, suggest these three ideas that may get him "unstuck."

1. Look it up. If he can't remember what a science term means or when a historical event took place, he might search in his textbooks, on old worksheets or corrected tests, or online. If he is struggling with math, he can flip to the back of the book to find practice problems with an answer key.

2. Skip ahead. Recommend that he try the next problem or question. Sometimes, moving forward is enough to help him figure out how

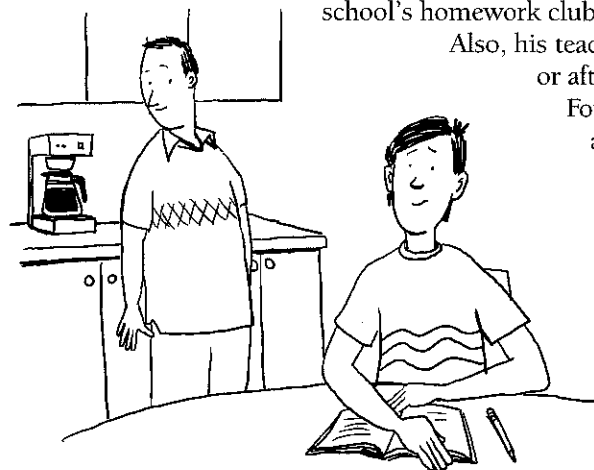
to answer the previous item. Then, he can go back and finish the one he skipped.

3. Get outside help. Encourage your teen to attend his school's homework club or take essays to the writing lab.

Also, his teachers probably offer assistance before or after school or during lunch periods.

For a change of pace, he could start a homework group. Having friends around will make homework more fun, and he'll learn more, too. Quizzing each other and explaining material will help him remember facts and deepen his understanding.

Note: If your child regularly struggles with assignments, contact his teacher for advice.



High School Years