

# Too much homework

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Teenagers need nine hours of sleep every night.

If they do not get nine hours, they will be tired throughout the day, not perform as well in school and in sports, and may even have stunted growth. However, getting this amount of sleep is often impossible because of the amount of homework given to students. Teachers assign hours and hours of homework each night, especially to upperclassmen. Trying to balance homework with family, sports, and other extracurricular activities leads to a lack of sleep. Therefore, teacher should use class time more efficiently and give less homework.

Lack of sleep has had a huge effect on my life for the past few years. The workload in middle school was manageable, but once I got to high school, it severely increased. Freshman year, I spend about three hours per night on homework. Sophomore year, the workload increased to about four hours per night. So far this year, I am spending five hours per night on schoolwork and getting far less than the required amount of sleep.

It has had a clear effect not only on my performance in school and in sports but on my overall happiness as well. Instead of waking up feeling refreshed and ready to learn, I can barely get up in the morning and throughout the day I feel tired and drowsy. For some of my friends and many other students, it is worse. I have heard of people consistently staying up all night to finish assignments. The purpose of school is to teach students, but how will they learn when they are practically asleep in class? It is not necessary for teachers to assign as much homework as they do. While it is true that students must practice to learn new material, that does not mean that they

should make students spend hours and hours every night practicing what they learned in class.

Also, much of the work assigned by teachers is busywork, work that does not help students learn but takes up even more of their time. Many assignments are far too long. I have several friends who are given 80 math problems per night. If this were reduced to 40 problems per night, I believe they would learn the material just as well while cutting the time in half. If teachers were to eliminate unnecessary assignments and make the others more manageable, it would greatly benefit their students.

Although school is undoubtedly important, it is not everything for teenage high school students, nor should it be. It is essential to have a life outside of school. This includes family, friends, and sports. Kids should have a healthy balance of schoolwork and extracurricular activities. With an excessive amount of homework, however, this is not possible. For example, I used to study chess and play tennis every day after school, but when I got to high school, I was forced to stop playing chess because homework took too much time.

Homework gives students less time for extracurricular activities and even less time to sleep. A possible criticism of giving less homework is that students would not learn the material as well. However, quality is important as well as quantity. If the busywork was taken away, and teachers made sure that only work that is directly related to the learning of the material was assigned, then students would learn just as much in less time. Teachers could also use class time more efficiently. It takes students a certain amount

of time to learn new material, so if they were able to learn more of it in class then they would have less to do at home.

In a psychology class this year, we watched a 40-minute video about something other than what we were learning. That would have been enough time to complete the notes that were due the next class. Class time used for activities not directly related to the material should be cut out, leaving more time for teaching relevant lessons. An additional benefit of this strategy is that students would learn more in class because they would be getting more sleep, leaving them better prepared to learn in school the next day. Critics of the idea of giving less homework may claim that students procrastinate on their assignments and therefore should take the blame for their lack of sleep. While this explanation may apply to some students, the vast majority get their schoolwork done as soon as they can.

This does not necessarily mean that they get to work right after school; sports practices or family obligations may get in the way. This means that when they get a chance to do homework, they will do it, not procrastinate. I am taking six classes, each of which assign homework daily. On a typical night, I have about five hours of homework. If I start working when I get home from tennis practice at six o'clock, factoring in dinner, I will not go to bed until after midnight. Most students do not get enough sleep not because they procrastinate but because of the ludicrous amount of homework assigned to them.

The purpose of school is to educate. Students learn best when they arrive at school feeling refreshed after nine hours of sleep. However, they rarely get

this much sleep due to the amount of homework assigned to them by teachers. If teachers want to ensure that students are best prepared to learn the material that they are teaching, they will use their class time more efficiently and only for activities directly related to the content they are teaching. This will allow them to assign less homework, and their students will come to class ready to learn.