

Should homework be optional? – free essay

[Business](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

With stacking statistics proving damaging effects of stress on teens, it's shocking that teens are still given up to five or more hours of homework a night, while statistically, academic pressure is a leading cause of stress in teens. The majority of parents and teachers believe that homework is a student's opportunity to reinforce or practice new material. But how much homework is enough, and just how effective is homework? Stress isn't always destructive. It can provide energy to handle emergencies, make changes, meet challenges and excel.

But even though some amount of stress is useful, indeed even helpful, the long-term consequences of constant stress are damaging to mental and physical health. If stress is constant and unrelieved, the body has little time to relax and recover. The stress button keeps getting pushed, continually releasing stress hormones when not needed, putting the body into overdrive. As a result, stress disorders can arise such as: high blood pressure, headaches, reduced eyesight, stomachaches and other digestive problems, facial, neck and back pain. High levels of the major stress hormone, cortisol, depress the immune system.

A number of studies found that high levels of cortisol are implicated in AIDS, MS, diabetes, cancer, coronary artery disease, Alzheimer's disease, and Parkinson's disease (Lewis, p. 4). While stress and cortisol take a toll on the body, they take an equally high toll on the brain. Joyce Walker, University of Minnesota, undertook a study and survey to determine the effect of stress and tension in adolescents and how said stress can cause destructive behavior. The research focused on several situations that teens face and describe how they deal with it.

<https://assignbuster.com/should-homework-be-optional-free-essay/>

The observations concluded that out of 4, 300 students, 54 percent of them suffered from mild to severe depression compared to those who were not depressed, and could handle problems effectively. Stress can make one forgetful and emotional, create anxiety and depression, and put one at risk of many mental illnesses such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder. Becky Beacom, health education manager for PAMF, surveyed 124 adolescents to explore what they find most stressful. 55 percent said homework and school over family and social life. And according to a survey released by the American Psychological Association (APA), during the school year, teens say their stress level is higher than levels reported by adults. It is proven that academic pressure acts as a chronic stressor, for students of every age and level - from elementary school through college and beyond.

When enrolled in school, there is pressure to do well - and school becomes a daily focal point of life no matter what else one is involved in or how old one is. GreatSchools.org mentions standardized tests, increased homework loads and participation in advanced classes as school-related stressors. And a 2013 Stockholm University survey revealed that one-third of Swedish high school students experience serious stress related to pressure to perform in school, with eight percent reporting stress levels high enough to be considered burnout. With all of this evidence which proves a correlation between school and stress, and the effect of stress on teens, why are teen's work loads still stacking? The typical course load for high school students involves four major courses and two electives. For each class, up to an hour of homework or studying can be assigned each night, and more for advanced courses.

And while a portion of students will participate in afterschool clubs or sports, others will have other responsibilities to take care of, like family obligations or work. So therefor, many students will have limited time to complete assignments and meet deadlines and suffer from the pressure and stress that comes along. Is it worth it? As mentioned earlier, homework is given to students to strengthen skills and reinforce new material. Though as one parent states, “ If the kids haven’t learned the concepts by the time they leave the classroom... the homework is pointless” (Broos, CNN), the effectiveness of homework becomes questionable. Another parent from California states, “ Homework should never replace a teaching opportunity in the classroom” (Yakich, CNN), and how class time is used becomes questionable too. A solution would be for teachers to make better use of class time by giving students the opportunity to complete assignments in class, this way students have more resources available to them and help from teachers.

This way student’s schedules aren’t restricted by the amount of homework they have. And although homework can be helpful in augmenting new skills, more than an hour of homework a night is unnecessary and excess. If homework were to be optional, the students who have the opportunity to complete assignments would be benefitted by the practice. And for those who do not have the chance to complete homework assignments, they will not be at a disadvantage. And those who have the time, but simply choose not to participate, will certainly not benefit from the lack of reinforcement.