

# The good, the bad, and homework

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A study conducted by Stanford University found that students in middle to high income school districts receive on average three hours of homework every night (Parker). After an extensive day brimming with classes who would yearn to go home and immediately undertake this additional burden of homework? Unfortunately for most students, this is precisely what they have to do; this is particularly challenging for those who partake in extracurricular activities. These students stay up later to study, otherwise the abundance of homework handed out by teachers would never get completed. The overload of homework students receive on a daily basis is detrimental to their well being, for it results in a debilitating surge of stress levels, an inadequate development of life skills, and deprivation of necessary sleep. Stress, the plague all students wish to avoid, increases with the extra homework burden and affects students' ability to work at the high level required of them.

When the number of hours kids spend on homework goes up, their stress levels inflate as well, causing anxiety; they feel the need to excel at everything and keep the A everyone strives for. When the pressure goes up it can lead to fatigue and even forgetting information previously studied. Sian Beilock, a professor at the University of Chicago, organized a study to show how stress affected students' performance on tests. Two testing groups were created, the first was told to do their best and the second was told they would be evaluated and compensated based on their performance. While the first group did not experience negative effects, the second group exhibited problems with their working memory, " a short-term memory system involved in the control, regulation, and active maintenance of a limited

amount of information immediately relevant to the task at hand”(Beilock). The additional stress caused the subjects brains to work at a lower capacity, thus lowering test scores.

Not only does stress cause poorer academic performance, but it also results in health problems, some of which can be very dangerous. Since homework is a constant factor of school it can induce prolonged or chronic stress. Typical symptoms like depression and fatigue are hardships no one should deal with. Sadly, in order to manage this ordeal people form habits such as overeating and in extreme cases drug use. When a student faces an ordeal such as this, the ripple effect spreads out affecting other members in the family.

The person in question becomes irritable and takes it out on family members. Parents see their child struggling to keep afloat in this never ending whirlpool of homework and feel helpless. They do not know how to help their child through this overload, and it subsequently lowers the wellbeing of the household. Consequently, the negative effects of stress are like an avalanche that eventually overwhelms the person and their family. Additionally, too much homework takes away precious time crucial to the development of life skills needed by children and young adults. While all the focus is on school work other much needed life skills are neglected.

There is simply no time left for teens to comfortably engage in other activities like sports or clubs where interactions between people help develop communication and other coping skills. When students graduate from high school and college and go into the world to find a job,

communication is extremely important. Employers, colleagues, and others in everyday life must be able to clearly communicate and understand each other. Things can go wrong, and most likely will, if ideas cannot be clearly communicated. This skill is mainly cultivated when children are exposed to a diverse group of peers outside of school and given the chance to connect with them.

Building upon that, the only way for kids to learn how to properly interact with others is to actually do it. There is no book or step by step plan that can teach them these types of interpersonal skills. Interactions with people on the playground and in the workplace occur daily and are an important part of how society works. If all their time is spent studying, how will they ever acquire the tools to communicate through interaction? Lastly, homework takes away students' ability to pursue hobbies and interests, which all kids need to become well rounded people. When kids are not allowed to develop creative and character building interests, they lose the ability to function outside of their educational structure since all their effort was focused on assignments.

Thus, they have no aspirations for a career and potentially end up wasting countless amounts of money and time on college while trying to figure out what they want to do in life. Social interactions at a young age through activities and sports are imperative to the development of life skills, but regrettably are not always possible for most because of the overwhelming burden of homework. Sleep deprivation harms students whose brains are still developing and diminishes their overall ability to function properly in the classroom. Since various instructors assign mountains of homework, <https://assignbuster.com/the-good-the-bad-and-homework/>

students are often forced to stay up late to complete the work. These late nights cut into the eight to ten hours recommended by doctors, causing teens to be unfocused in class and perform at a lower level than normal.

When students are sleep deprived, it disrupts their internal circadian clock which regulates humans sleep cycles. This disruption causes lower GPAs as shown in a study at the University of Michigan. The professors, Shelley Hershner and Ronald Chervin, found that “ students who obtained more sleep( ? 9 hours) had higher GPAs than short sleepers( ? 6 hours): GPAs were 3. 24 vs. 2. 74 on average, respectively” (Hershner).

Safety also comes into play when people are sleep deprived. The same study also showed that remaining awake for “ 17 hours was equivalent to a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0. 05%, and 24 hours was equivalent to 0. 1%, above the legal level for intoxication”(Hershner). This causes impairment of judgment and may even result in car accidents or other potentially fatal mishaps.

With those types of effects from lack of sleep it would be near impossible for students to remain focused in class. When people sleep, their bodies naturally release hormones like insulin to regulate eating. Those who do not get the right amount of sleep interfere with this system. When human bodies do not receive enough insulin weight gain occurs, which can lead to obesity and diabetes. While no one would wish this upon anyone, the reality is too much homework can cause students to not get enough sleep and puts them at risk for these negative impacts. Some people will argue that the amount

of homework handed out is beneficial and necessary to reinforce the material learned in class, thus helping students perform better on tests.

They could even back up their point with examples of places like Shanghai, where students have the most homework worldwide and still score highest on the math Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests (News)(Barshay). Whereas the United States math test scores rank thirty-sixth in the world and student receive about six hours less than their counterparts in Singapore (News). However, because this is an average of the whole country, the results do not show how certain areas receive less work, but still maintain high academic standards. Additionally, Finland's students, receive on average a little less than three hours of homework a week and have the sixth best PISA test scores in the world. Therefore, if Finland's students can accomplish this with the minimal amount of work and have a well rounded life can it really be said that " more" is advantageous? The amount of homework students are presented with makes it virtually impossible for growing children to keep stress at bearable levels, develop imperative life skills, and to acquire the essential hours of sleep advocated for by doctors. The best way to go about changing how much homework students receive would be to approach the school board or the superintendent with samples of validated research results.

Their contact information will most likely be found on a school district's website. The school district would have the power to set regulations on the amount and kinds of homework that can be assigned on a nightly basis. These guidelines would help ensure the health and safety of the student population.

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