

Brianna Clock



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### Reducing Homework: Necessary for Students' Well-Being

If you mention the word homework to any student, they will likely sigh, groan, or even begin to cry. Many would think this is an overreaction, but is it? The amount of homework students receive, up to three and a half hours per night in high school (Robinson and Aronica), may warrant an upset, angry, or even tearful response. Three hours of homework per night, after an average of seven hours in school per day, can take a toll on a lot of students. They may lose interest in their hobbies, feel there is not enough time to spend with family, or become so mentally stressed that they begin failing school altogether. Although some argue less homework would harm students, excessive amounts of it hinder other important aspects of students' lives such as creativity, relationships, and mental health.

Homework has long been disputed. Some want more of it, and some want none at all. Both sides of the argument are valid; however, students' health should come first. This is where more homework starts to become risky. As students are assigned more and more homework, they are expected to complete it. If a child has three hours of homework every night, how are they to devote time to their creative hobbies, their family, and their stress relief? Many students are working nearly ten hours every day, which is more than an eight-hour workday for an adult. Many are also expected to learn to drive, maintain healthy relationships, and even find part-time jobs, all while sleeping at least eight hours at night. While students continue to put pressure on

themselves, the homework continues to pile up. Raging hormones and pressure to grow up continue, and it is expected that students continue to do well in school. The amount of stress students face can be draining. It is crucial to reduce stress for students, and this can be done by reducing homework.

Overwhelming amounts of homework reduce students' creativity. In her article, Cathy Vatterott, a professor of education at the University of Missouri, stated, "[Teens need to] Fall in love, not with a person, but with a passion." With three hours of homework every night, many students may feel they do not have enough time to find their passion. Many may want to rest after they have completed their work, as they would not have the energy needed to be creative through their hobbies. Creativity and inspiration take energy and work, and even if a student enjoys drawing or writing, they will not have the energy needed to create if they have been working for three hours. Students given too much homework are more likely to drop activities and not pursue enjoyable hobbies (Parker). When students drop after-school activities such as drama and sports, and when they stop pursuing hobbies they enjoy, they will begin to focus only on school. School is not the real world. As Vatterott stated, "Failing a test or even a course does not make them a failure." Students who focus too much on school after dropping healthy, creative hobbies, are subject to believing school is all that matters. This can become very dangerous and negatively affect their mental health. When homework becomes too much, students will lose their creative drive.

Excessive amounts of homework can be harmful to important relationships. When students are dedicating exorbitant amounts of time to homework, they spend less time with family (Clifton). When parents get home from work, students will more than likely be working on homework. They may still have hours of it to go. Aside from eating dinner, most parents

cannot spend time with their children. At higher levels of school, it becomes harder for parents to help children with their homework, so homework offers very little opportunity for family time. Even when parents can help, issues may arise. Parents may become upset with their children, and children may become upset with their parents. “Now all our free time during the week is spent badgering our son about his homework.” (Menéndez). This causes divides in the parent-child relationship. When parents explain certain things, their children may not understand. This can lead to parents becoming frustrated, and children may not ask for help anymore, which can lead to failure in school. When homework lasts for hours, families have less time together, and it can become frustrating.

Hours of homework can seriously affect students’ mental health. “56 percent of the students considered homework a primary source of stress, according to the survey data.... Less than 1 percent of the students said homework was not a stressor.” (Clifton). Stress has major negative effects on health. It can cause anxiety, depression, and sleep deprivation. Children above the age of nine are already hormonal and prone to emotional and mental breakdowns. Having too much homework only worsens the stress they already have. “We’ve seen an uptick in students with anxiety. It just wasn’t this bad a few years ago.... They act like they’ve got it all together, then the smallest thing has them in tears or leads to a meltdown.” (Vatterott 14). The effects of homework on mental health are exceedingly dangerous. The pressure students feel, even if it is unintended, is at absurdly high levels. “Already in preschool, he faced anxiety about testing. And now, for the first time, he’s telling me that school feels like a prison.” (Menéndez). As more homework is added, students pressure themselves to get better grades. This pressure causes debilitating stress, as well as anxiety and depression.

Although these points have been made, some may still argue that reducing homework deprives students of learning. "Poor presentation skills mean that leaders fail to inspire their teams, products fail to sell, entrepreneurs fail to attract funding, and careers fail to soar." (Gallo). If students receive less homework, this means their papers will be shorter, their presentations will be lessened, and other homework assignments that take longer to complete will be removed. Without the skills that these homework assignments provide, students will not be ready for the work force. Getting rid of or reducing homework is dangerous for students. Without the additional homework students need, they will not succeed. They need the extra practice to understand their work. It is more important that students learn than that they are given less homework. Reducing homework means reducing the amount of learning students can accomplish.

While this argument is substantial, it is refutable. Reducing homework does not deprive students of learning. Rather than lengthy assignments be removed, due dates can be spread out, and they can be worked on in class. If due dates are spread out by subject for longer assignments, students will not have to spend exceedingly long on homework. They can work for a few minutes on the assignment, then move on without the fear of not completing it on time. Further, assignments such as essays and presentations can be worked on in class. If the students have any questions as they work, they can ask the teacher. This will give them more free time at home. Students will continue to learn even without homework. Some counties in Florida have completely removed homework, and others have set limits (Menéndez). The students have been happier and healthier. In elementary schools, there is no benefit at all to homework, and students are better off reading (Menéndez). Some homework is important in upper levels of school, but

too much is harmful. Due dates can be expanded, and reducing homework will have little, if any, effect on students learning.

Although there are arguments against less homework, too much of it has a negative impact on students' creative skills, important relationships, and mental health. Creativity is hindered when homework takes away from creative free time. Students have less time to focus on free reading, art, music, and a variety of other creative outlets. Parent-child relationships are damaged when family time is taken up by homework. Family time is lost when students have hours of homework every night. Mental health issues arise when too much homework is assigned. Stress, anxiety, and even depression can appear and worsen when students are assigned overwhelming amounts of homework. The bottom line is hours of homework every night is dangerous for students. The amount of homework students have now is detrimental to their well-being. Less homework must be assigned to improve students' happiness, safety, and, yes, even learning.

## Works Cited

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