

Evolution International School

Homework Policy

March 2018

Rationale

Homework, when given, should be useful, meaningful and engaging.

If the purpose of homework is to practice what was learnt in class, then it must be remembered that this skill has already been learnt. Practice should be kept to a minimum to avoid repetition. If a particular skill or concept was not consolidated in the classroom, then it is unlikely to be consolidated at home when the student is left to their own devices. This type of homework is more likely to lead to the reinforcement of incorrect procedures or understandings, which in turn may lead the learner to be frustrated and confused.

Homework does not need to be given unless it is an extension of research, thought and inquiry. This type of homework allows for the development of independence and individuality and is an opportunity to extend schoolwork beyond the classroom. Anything that encourages the student to think beyond what was taught in the classroom may lead to discovery and promote a spirit of inquiry. Homework should maintain a love of learning and a thirst for knowledge.

Types of homework

- Flipped learning – where the learner is introduced to material before it is taught in the classroom, primes the learner so that they may enter the lesson with questions in mind and prior knowledge. This allows for more classroom time being spent on discussion and problem solving activities with less need for didactic teaching and means that work that would otherwise be seen as homework can be done in the classroom under teacher supervision (see flippedlearning.org for more information). However, it should be remembered that the parent is not the teacher, so work should not be given that requires the parent to teach. Parent support and encouragement is always welcome but ultimately if the student cannot do it themselves, then the work is too difficult and inappropriate for homework.
- Application – students apply the skills they have learnt in the classroom to activities that require thought and problem solving
- Reading – all students have a new class reader every six weeks to accompany their unit. They should be encouraged to read set amounts each week so that they are ready to engage in discussion during English classes
- Maths – the Singapore maths method requires a certain amount of homework, so time must be allocated each week to this. Teachers should remember that ‘interleaving’ works best when practicing maths. This means that students learn best when using skills and concepts that come from different time periods: one day, one week, one month, one term, one year ago

- Flexibility – give students the flexibility to choose their homework assignments. This will allow for differentiation and student engagement. It may be appropriate for some students to learn a series of spellings that follow a spelling pattern or are required to be used during their unit but for other students this work may be a waste of time. These students would be better using their vocabulary in writing an assignment or doing some research.
- Encourage inquiry - If there wasn't enough time to teach something in class then are you trying to cover too much material; breadth rather than depth? Or are you not utilizing the teaching time effectively. Far better to create a classroom question that encourages students to go home and come back to school with further information about the topic covered or with questions they want answered.

The amount of homework

When giving set homework you must consider the needs of your colleagues. Remember, French and Arabic probably want to give homework on a regular basis, although again, the type of homework given in these subjects must be discussed carefully within the team. In your planning teams you must come up with a schedule for homework so that you, as a team, are aware of how much homework you are expecting students to do each week.

A rule of thumb for the maximum homework given is the grade multiplied by 10 e.g. grade 2x10=20 minutes per day. However, less than this is perfectly acceptable. Remember homework time includes daily reading.

However, this is not compulsory and homework set on a weekly basis or even six week unit basis is preferable as it allows students to organize their own time to suit the other demands they have after school. How many of you like to do a full day at work and then have a pile of work to take home as well when you have family, friends and your interests to attend to. These are the best years of a child's life...let's now spoil them. Serious discussions in your collaborative planning meetings should determine sensible levels of homework and the purpose of homework.