



Homework Tips

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- Make sure you leave your school with the correct information. Make a final check at a certain specific point of your day. For example, if math's your last class, make a conscious effort to mental check everything you need while walking from math class to your locker. If you need a double reminder, make a sign for your locker, or if that's embarrassing, use a symbol - tell your friends it's a friend's good luck charm, but instead, it's actually a reminder to double check your bag before you leave. If you use a daytimer (highly suggested), make sure to check the day's list at this time.
- Place things that are headed for home in your bag or in a certain section of your locker throughout the day and as they are assigned so that they are completely ready and all in the same spot when you need to leave.
- Use a daytimer to schedule your assignments. Keep it with you at all times and during all classes. Make a habit of looking a few days ahead to see what's due. When you are entering a large assignment or project on a specific date, make some key entries before that date to remind you to complete certain sections at specific times. For example, backdate as follows: 2nd Friday: Project due, Wednesday: Final Rough Draft Due, Monday: Complete Outlines of Each section, Preceding Friday: Complete Research, and so on, right back to today's date, when you were assigned the project. Try to give yourself one day in between the due date and your completion date, so you have an extra day to re-read and double check. In your daytimer, use a check box at the left of each thing to do, and then check it off when you've completed it.
- If you have trouble remembering to return your stuff to school, put each completed thing back into your school bag as you complete it. This helps you feel like you've accomplished something and ensures that it will return to school the next day.
- Pace your bag in a certain spot away from your room or the place you do homework (possibly near the door), so you actually physically get up and place finished items in your bag in another location.
- Before you start the semester, make a list of all necessary things, find them, and then place them all in the designated homework spot: tape, stapler, staple remover, hole puncher, pens, pencils, markers, rulers, extra paper, plain and lined etc. Make sure you include adequate light for night work. This ensures you have no excuse to leave your work and get otherwise distracted.
- If you want a drink or need to go for a washroom break, say to yourself that you'll go as soon as you finish....this only thing, so that you accomplish just a little more and expand your attention span before you move out of the designated spot.
- If you are a very hyperactive learner or need many things happening at once, use music to complete your homework. The key here is to ensure that the music is something orderly and recognizable. This means use a CD or tape that you already know; do not use any surprise tapes or listen to the radio. The element of surprise leads to distraction, but expected music in certain orders helps a hyperactive mind concentrate.
- Your designated spot doesn't have to be a desk. Some people work well on the sofa, at the kitchen table, or on their bed. Whatever works, do it. The key is to make sure all the stuff you need is at arm's reach.
- If you feel yourself wearing thin or getting tired, get up and jog on the spot for a few moments. This will give you more energy and get you back on track.
- Try to arrange your homework at the same time each day. It gets you into a routine and does make your homework easier to complete. It is better to start earlier rather than later. This reduces stress and allows for more completion time if necessary. For example, if you have a class every second day (this seems to be the norm for semestered high schools), complete your homework the day it is assigned, not the day before it is due.



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- Sometimes, frequent breaks work for certain students, but for others, breaks simply prolong the process. If you find that you take a lot of breaks, re-evaluate the 'breaks' strategy, and start timing yourself. How long can you work on a task? Once you've find your limit, work on prolonging it. Yesterday, I went ten minutes. Today, I'll strive for a little longer. Do not obsess over this, just jot down the time of starting in your daytimer and jot down the first time you feel you've wandered from the task. Whatever the number of minutes was, see if you can better it the next day. Do not make this part of the homework task, just keep it a simple routine to see how you're attention is building.
- Only work on a computer if you have the information you need, or if it is indeed faster for you. If it's not, then do it the old-fashioned way, then type it when you're done.
- For projects or reports, write out one title for each section you need and then proceed with research, continuously referring back to the section as you find information that's relevant. (This includes the bibliography. As you use each book or website, fill in the bibliographic information.) At first, just jot down the main points for each section. Of course, if you are pulling a concept or paraphrasing, immediately jot the name of the book and the page for easy citing later.
- Place all your homework due in a pile on your left side and as you complete it, put it away in your bag, as noted in # 5. However, if seeing what you've completed makes you feel better, and helps you compare to what you still need to do, then place the completed items on your right side in a pile. If this causes extra anxiety, then use tip # 5.
- If you are freaked out by the 'amounts' of homework, do the ones with the largest textbooks first, (with the exception of things which need to be handed in the next day - obviously those should be completed first) so that you feel like you are accomplishing more.
- Don't spend a lot of time prioritizing or planning. With the exception of things which need to be handed in on the next day, just put everything in a pile, then start. After all, it's all important and all needs to be done. This gets you started faster. There are no decisions about what to start first, you just do the first thing in the pile on your left.
- If you need help starting, then find an easy thing to get you going, but then move on. If that doesn't work, then say to yourself, I'll count to 50, then start. Then do it.
- If you are working on a project, don't start on the title page, get the 'meat' of the report done first.
- Do not allow phone interruptions while working on your homework. Let your message machine take calls or have your family say you'll be available at 10:00 p.m. or whatever time you designate as a break time. If you know it will be a long phone call, don't even take it at 10:00, unless you've completed everything except title pages, etc. which you can do while on the phone.
- you are on the phone, make the time count. Organize your notes, hole punch loose-leaf papers, staple your reports, make index covers, etc.
- Try to do more the one thing at a time when possible. For example, if you're waiting for the printer to print out ten pages of stuff, and it's slow, do something else, don't just watch it. You can do a small organizing job or throw away all the designated garbage papers, for example, or get your next job ready.
- Do not duplicate your work. Do not complete something in messy format, then say you'll rewrite it later. That takes double the effort and adds up to more time and more frustration. Just write it in semi-reasonable penmanship to begin with...
- If you feel yourself slipping in a particular subject, get help quickly. Do not let it wait. It adds up, and then you may end up feeling overwhelmed. Contact a guidance counsellor, ask your teacher for extra help, get a tutor, ask a student who is ahead of you for extra help, or do whatever it takes to get things under control right away. Make a sign and stick it up in your room or near your designated homework spot to remind you at the right time, something to the effect of "When it gets tough, get help - right away. Otherwise, before you know it, the end of the year is here and you are in trouble.
- Complete one large job at a time, with the exception of the points in #22, do not start something new unless the previous job is complete.

If you have any other questions or problems with your homework, please email us and we'll be happy to send you a list of suggestions.