



WESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS HOMEWORK GUIDELINES

“The Weston Public Schools believe that students should be given the opportunity to learn and grow academically, socially and emotionally. Time to think, to sleep, to read and to play should be considered as important to student development as is time to complete homework.”

Homework Policy (IKB)
Weston School Committee, June 4, 2018

What is Homework?

Homework is a meaningful and valuable tool that supports and enhances learning. When teachers assign homework to students that is purposeful, manageable, and developmentally appropriate, they can accelerate academic growth, enrich the school experience, and promote a positive interest in learning. Homework often can be a very individual and subjective activity. Thus, it is important that teachers differentiate homework appropriately and assess student homework performance in a formative, growth-oriented manner.

Purposes of Homework

Effective homework has a clear educational purpose, is connected to the classroom learning, and may be classified as one or more of the following:

- *Study skills* help students to learn responsibility, perseverance, self-discipline, and time management.
- *Checking for understanding* provides the teacher with information about each student’s knowledge in order to plan for re-teaching as well as for further understanding.
- *Preparation* allows students the opportunity to prepare for classroom instruction, preview content, and give them the measures and confidence to earnestly participate in future lessons.
- *Practice* reinforces skills and concepts taught in class. It also helps students integrate newly acquired skills with what the student already knows.
- *Extension and Enrichment* gives students the opportunity to transfer skills and concepts to new situations. This can include the opportunity to investigate and respond to an authentic, real-world, engaging and complex problem or challenge.
- *Independence* stimulates individual initiative by providing opportunities for increased self-direction, time management, personal responsibility, confidence, ownership, and resilience.
- *Authenticity* helps homework to be creative, authentic, and student-led, and can value quality over quantity.

Due Dates and Calendar

Secondary grades (6-12) will have three no-homework weekends during the year. These will be publicized by building principals. We consider those three weekends, as well as the four major vacations (Thanksgiving, December, February, April) to be protected time for family and leisure activities. Therefore, no homework will be assigned the day before these breaks and no homework will be due or assessment given on the first day that class meets afterwards. If a student requests an extension, the new date may fall on an otherwise-prohibited due-date. Also, the choice of an individual student to manage his/her time by working during a break is acceptable.

In our multi-cultural district, we understand that there will be religious and cultural days when homework completion will be limited for some students. It is incumbent on families to communicate this information to teachers so that reasonable accommodations can be made. In accordance with school policy and Massachusetts law, no penalty will apply to any student solely because religious practice interfered with his/her ability to complete work.

Independent Reading

In addition to content area homework that occurs throughout the school year, we encourage your child to read independently every evening and on the weekends. Independent reading is an important part of a child’s reading program. Research shows that students who read more from the books they can read and want to read will succeed in school and beyond. The more time your child spends reading at his/her independent reading level, the better reader he/she will become.

Due Date Coordination and Student Workload

Students will be given advance notice of long-term assignments to best manage their time and resources. Concurrent deadlines cannot always be avoided. Teachers will attempt to communicate across disciplines to coordinate the dates of major assessments and/or due dates for major assignments.

If a student has multiple major assignments due on a given day, the student is encouraged to speak to the teacher(s) directly.

Guidelines for Homework Time:

K-1	approximately 20 minutes of shared reading per night for 4 nights
2	approximately 20 minutes of independent reading and 10 minutes of math per night for 4 nights
3	approximately 20 minutes of reading and 20 minutes of additional work per night for 4 nights
4-5	approximately 30 minutes of reading and 30 minutes of homework per night for 4 nights
6	approximately 6 hours per week
7	approximately 7 hours per week
8	approximately 8 hours per week
9-12	up to 2-3 hours per academic course per week *

* AP classes may require additional hours. When selecting these courses, parents/guardians and students should be mindful that self-discipline, judgment and the ability to manage time effectively will be necessary for success. Overriding into an honors or AP course may lead to more time/effort being required to complete assigned homework.

NOTE: Only AP courses will have summer homework assigned to be completed prior to the school year.

Feedback to students for learning

Students benefit most from schoolwork and homework when they are able to reflect on their learning progress. To this end, teachers will provide feedback on assignments. This will vary in content and type according to the assignment. At times, assignments may be checked for completeness, but there will also be multiple opportunities for feedback about content. Teachers will return homework assignments with appropriate feedback in a timely manner so that students can use their homework to study for tests.

In the high school, teachers will put grades into the Infinite Campus portal within one eight-day rotation for small assignments and within two eight-day rotations for major assignments. Teachers can make grades visible to students on other electronic portals (Google Classroom, WebAssign, etc.); however, these grades must be copied to Infinite Campus within two eight-day rotations.

Feedback to educators to inform practice

Teachers will seek feedback (from students and/or parents/guardians) on homework assignments through a variety of means including, but not limited to, surveys, discussions, and conferences.

We recognize and value the roles of families in supporting student learning, and strongly encourage educators, administration and families to work together. In order to ensure alignment with current research and adherence to district guidelines, educators and administrators should work collaboratively.

Parent/Guardian Roles

- Encourage and ensure a balance in all after school activities.
- Provide time for student to engage in independent reading.
- Support students in time management for short- and long-term assignments.
- Although conversations with friends and families are often helpful in clarifying assignments, final products should reflect student work.
- Support students by asking questions about the assignment.
- Encourage students to speak with educators if homework assignments are too difficult or take too long, etc.
- Speak with educators on behalf of younger students if assignments are consistently too difficult or take too long.

Teacher Roles

- Clearly communicate the purpose and expectations of homework.
- Make assignments
 - Recorded in agendas for elementary students, and
 - Posted in/linked from Google Classroom for secondary students
- Within disciplines and/or grade levels, collaborate to meet comparable goals; however, a variety of pedagogical strategies for homework assignments may be employed.
- Strive to coordinate major assignments with other courses/departments to balance overall student workload.
- Adjust homework to accommodate student needs while preserving the integrity and purpose of the assignment.
- Be receptive to student advocacy in relation to a student's overall workload.

Student Roles

- Read for pleasure.
- Plan short- and long-term assignments using calendars, agenda, etc.
- Ask clarifying questions about assignments and/or feedback from assignments.
- Speak directly with teacher(s) if assignments are consistently too difficult or if balance of overall workload is needed.
- Know the purpose of each assignment – Is it for practice? Preview? A quick check for understanding? Enrichment?
- Strive to practice healthy life habits.

References

- Marzano, R. J., Pickering, D. J. (2007). The case for and against homework. *Educational Leadership*, 64(6), 74-79.
- Pope, D., Brown, M., and Miles, S. (2015). *Overloaded and underprepared: Strategies for stronger schools and healthy, successful kids*. San Francisco: CA: John Wiley & Sons.
- Vatterott, C. (2009). *Rethinking homework: Best practices that support diverse needs*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

We also learned and borrowed from the policies, practices, and guidelines of numerous districts across the country and beyond. These districts include the following:

Concord-Carlisle, MA; Greenwich, CT; Lexington, MA; Lincoln-Sudbury, MA; Needham, MA; Newton, MA; Ocala, FL; Palo Alto, CA; Victoria, Australia; Wayland, MA; Wellesley, MA; Westwood, MA