



How To: Choose the Right Amount of Daily Homework

Getting students to complete homework is an complex and ongoing challenge for teachers and parents. However, there is one key question that research can help instructors to answer: How much homework should be assigned per grade level? The table below, *How Much Homework Per Day is Optimal?*, provides recommendations from 3 sources on the lower and upper limits for daily homework time requirements.

Despite the differences in the recommendations from these sources, the table shows broad agreement about how much homework to assign at each grade. At grades 1-3, homework should be limited to an hour or less per day, while in grades 4-6, homework should not exceed 90 minutes. The upper limit in grades 7-8 is 2 hours and the limit in high school should be 2.5 hours.

Teachers can use the homework time recommendations included here as a point of comparison: in particular, schools should note that assigning homework that *exceeds* the upper limit of these time estimates is *not* likely to result in additional learning gains--and may even be counter-productive (Cooper, Robinson, & Patall, 2006).

It should also be remembered that the amount of homework assigned each day is not in itself a sign of high academic standards. Homework becomes a powerful tool to promote learning only when students grasp the purpose of each homework assignment, clearly understand homework directions, perceive that homework tasks are instructionally relevant, and receive timely performance feedback (e.g., teacher comments; grades) on submitted homework (Jenson, Sheridan, Olympia, & Andrews, 1994).

References

Cooper, H., Robinson, J. C., & Patall, E A. (2006). Does homework improve academic achievement? A synthesis of research, 1987-2003. *Review of Educational Research*, 76(1), 1-62.

Jenson, W. R., Sheridan, S. M., Olympia, D., & Andrews, D. (1994). Homework and students with learning disabilities and behavior disorders: A practical, parent-based approach. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 27, 538-548.



How Much Homework Per Day is Optimal?: What the Research Says...			
Grade	Source 1 (Barkley, 2008)	Source 2 (Cooper, Robinson, & Patall, 2006)	Source 3 (Olympia & Andrews, 1994)
1	10 Minutes	--	10-45 Minutes
2	20 Minutes	--	10-45 Minutes
3	30 Minutes	--	10-45 Minutes
4	40 Minutes	--	45-90 Minutes
5	50 Minutes	--	45-90 Minutes
6	1 Hour	--	45-90 Minutes
7	1 Hour 10 Minutes	1 - 2 Hours	1 - 2 Hours
8	1 Hour 20 Minutes	1 - 2 Hours	1 - 2 Hours
9	1 Hour 30 Minutes	1.5 - 2.5 Hours	1 - 2 Hours
10	1 Hour 40 Minutes	1.5 - 2.5 Hours	1.5 - 2.5 Hours
11	1 Hour 50 Minutes	1.5 - 2.5 Hours	1.5 - 2.5 Hours
12	2 Hours	1.5 - 2.5 Hours	1.5 - 2.5 Hours

References

Barkley, R. A. (2008). 80+ classroom accommodations for children or teens with ADHD. *The ADHD Report*, 16(4), 7-10.

Cooper, H., Robinson, J. C., & Patall, E. A. (2006). Does homework improve academic achievement? A synthesis of research, 1987-2003. *Review of Educational Research*, 76(1), 1-62.

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