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One

Homework Habits

'Education is the best provision for old age,'

ARISTOTLE

Homework is as much about developing good home-working habits as the work itself, especially in the early years at school. Like it or not, homework is a big part of school and you can make a real difference just by being on hand. There are no hard and fast rules that work for all children, but there are some simple steps you can take to make life easier.

- Provide somewhere inviting for your child to work. A desk, comfy chair and light in a child's bedroom are always a good idea, but you may find your child prefers to work somewhere near you. The kitchen table often seems to be a favourite, which is fine as long as you can keep distractions to a minimum.
- Try to set a routine for homework that suits everyone. It may be that your child likes to complete any work as soon as he or she gets home, but children are often hungry after school so a snack and drink first can be a good idea. You may even find that they work better after some time out relaxing or playing.
- Developing a set after-school routine means everyone knows what's expected. This can be especially helpful later at secondary school when homework becomes more serious.
- Avoid starting homework too late in the evening; children find it harder to concentrate when they are tired.

- Few children are keen on homework, so try not to worry that you have the only reluctant child.
- It can be hard balancing the needs of different-aged children but try not to let younger siblings flaunt their free time too much.
- Check that children know what their homework is when they come out of school, and that they have everything they need before going home.
- Most schools now give out homework diaries – if not, encourage your child to keep his/her own.
- Encourage your child to plan ahead for homework. Children are often given several days to complete a task and it's tempting to leave it to the last minute, overlooking evenings when they are busy with something else.
- When children find it hard to concentrate, it can help to split homework into shorter sections with a break in between. Give them a timer or a clock so they can chart their own progress and feel in control.
- If you see your child's attention wandering, take an interest in what they are doing. Look at their books and ask what question they are working on.
- Encourage research. Make sure children know how to find out information for themselves – from books, libraries and the Internet. The web in particular offers great scope for fact-finding but children need to be aware that not all websites are always accurate.
- Encourage children to read through their completed homework. It is very useful for children to get into the habit of checking their own work.



PARENTS' TIPS

DON'T:

- Allow homework in front of the TV – it's never a good idea.
- Do the homework for them.

DO:

- Offer children something to look forward to once the homework is done – it could be a game of football or time on their games console, a favourite TV programme, or even a sleepover with a friend.
- Give help and advice, or sit with your child while they are working, particularly if they are finding something difficult. Always praise the positive before you point out any mistakes.

How much homework should I expect?

UK government guidelines are clearly set out, emphasizing that homework should help children learn and reinforce lessons taught in the classroom. These guide times are suggested:

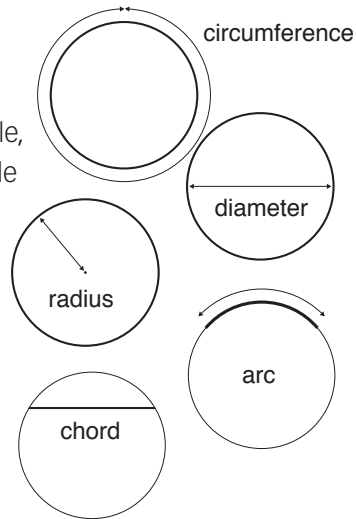
Years 1 and 2 – one hour of homework each week.

Years 3 and 4 – one-and-a-half hours each week.

Years 5 and 6 – thirty minutes per day.

Years 7 and 8 – forty-five to ninety minutes per day.

Circles – the **circumference** is the measurement around the circle, the **diameter** or width of the circle is the line across the middle; the **radius** is the distance from the centre point to the edge and is always half the diameter. An **arc** is a small section of the outer edge, and a **chord** is a straight line across the circle that does not go through the centre.



Compensation – in maths this is when you simplify a sum by rounding a number up or down to make it easier. For example, adding 300 instead of 291 and then compensating at the end by taking away 9 from the answer.

Division – chunking means to group chunks of the dividing number or **divisor** and subtract them from the **dividend** (the number you are dividing up). The answer in a division sum is called the **quotient**. You may also be asked if a number is **divisible** by another number, for instance, is 24 divisible by 3?

Factors – are all the whole numbers that divide exactly into another number. If you are asked to **factorize**, you are being asked to find all the factors of a number. **Prime factors** are factors that are also prime numbers.

Fractions – the **numerator** is the top number and the **denominator** is the bottom one.

Common confusions

I and me

Children, as well as some adults, struggle to work out when to use 'I' and when to use 'me' correctly in a sentence. In fact, the problem only arises when you (as I or me) are not alone.

You would never write 'Me went to the cinema', but you might write 'Jo and me went to the cinema', instead of the correct 'Jo and I went to the cinema'.

Always try to remember whether you would use 'I' or 'me' in a sentence if there was not an extra person. Look at these two sentences:

The man handed Jo and me our tickets.

Or:

The man handed Jo and I our tickets.

If you remove Jo, it is obvious that the first version is right as you would never say 'The man handed I a ticket'.

To use the correct grammatical terms, 'I' is used when you are the subject noun, the person doing the action. 'Me' is used as the object noun, when you are the person affected by the action or verb.

More about verbs

To explain when something is taking place – in the past, present or future – the tense of the verb must change. We often only think about verb tenses when we are learning a foreign language but knowing when to use each form is just as important in English.

PARENTS' TIP

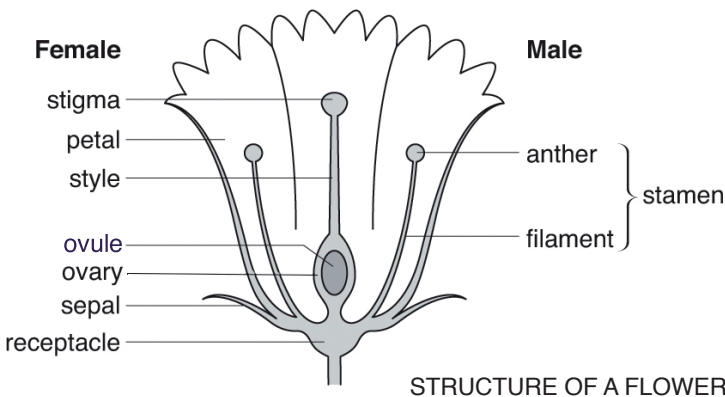


Get children to think about the food chains they are part of and how they might affect them. It is also fun to look at what their pets eat. They can even observe what the animals and birds in gardens and parks eat.

Plants

Parts of a plant

The petals of flowering plants are usually brightly coloured and may also be scented to attract insects for pollination. In wind- or self-pollinated plants, petals are small or non-existent.



Sepals – grow in a ring outside the petals. They are often green or brown and quite small in size. They protect the flower bud.

Nectary – produces sweet nectar which insects drink. The nectaries are usually deep inside the flower which means insects brush past the anthers and pick up pollen grains which they then carry on to the next flower, pollinating it in the process.

Carpel – this is the female part of the flower and it includes the stigma, style and ovary which produces ovules or eggs. This is the part which produces seeds or fruit once pollination has taken place.

Stamen – this is the male part of a plant. Each stamen has a stalk called a filament with an anther containing pollen at the end. Some flowers have many stamens, others just a few. When the anthers or pollen sacs are ripe, they split open to release their pollen.

Receptacle – all parts of a flower are attached to a receptacle at the top of the flower stalk, which is often rounded in shape. In plants such as strawberries, the receptacle grows after fertilization and is edible.

The life cycle of plants

- Pollen is carried by insects or the wind from one flower to another. The stigma has a sticky surface and pollen grains will stick to it during pollination.
- The pollen joins with the ovules, or egg cells, in the ovary to fertilize the plant.
- Fertilization produces seeds or fruit.
- The seeds will grow into new plants after they have been scattered by animals or the wind, in a process called dispersal.