

# Document A

## Too Much Homework? Maybe Not.

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You may think kids are getting more homework than ever before. If so, think again. A new study released by Brookings' Brown Center on Education Policy shows that today's students have no more homework than their parents did when they were in school. Numerous articles and reports over the past few decades have suggested America's schools are overloading kids with more and more homework. But the Brookings study argues the opposite: homework loads have not changed over the past 30 years, and in fact homework benefits American students.

### Study in Numbers

The study's author, Tom Loveless, reviewed surveys taken by kids and parents about how much homework young students have. The results showed that the typical elementary student has 30-45 minutes of homework each night. The average high-schooler has about an hour. These numbers have remained the same since 1984.

In a set of guidelines published by the National Parent Teacher Association (PTA), the amount of time students should spend on homework is their grade level multiplied by ten minutes. For example, a third-grader should have 30 minutes of homework, a fifth-grader 50 minutes, and so on. Loveless, who was a sixth-grade teacher in the 1980s, says this system has stayed consistent into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

One change that occurred over the past three decades, however, is among 9-year-olds—the average age of a third-grader. In 1984, more 9-year-olds had no homework at all, versus today. "What's happened is, there were a number of kids at age 9 who had no homework [in 1984], but now that number does have some homework," Loveless told TFK. "Though it is a little amount of work, it is still an increase in the amount of time spent on homework [for third-graders]."

### Homework Helps

Homework is an important part of a student's education. Some teachers argue that homework prepares kids for state tests and for college. They worry that a lighter homework load will put kids at a disadvantage. "Homework has benefits that go well beyond what's going on in school," says Harris Cooper, a University of Missouri psychology professor who has studied homework's effect on test scores. Kids learn to be organized, manage their time and master new skills without a teacher's help.

Teachers give two reasons for assigning a lot of homework. First, they say, the government now requires schools to meet higher-than-ever achievement goals for students. Second, they know many parents want their children to be able to get into the nation's best colleges and universities. These parents believe homework is a way to ensure students are learning at their full capacity.

People who favor homework argue that it can have many other beneficial effects. First, they claim it can help students develop as learners. Second, they claim it can help students develop good study habits, and recognize that learning can occur at home as well as at school. Lastly, they agree that homework does not have to be traditional pencil-to-paper equations. Homework assignments can be interactive and entertaining, while still reinforcing the skills and standards being taught.