

# Exemplar

Higher Project

Unit: P201

Topic: Is Homework Beneficial to Students?

## Project Proposal form



Section One: Title, objective, responsibilities	
<p>Is homework beneficial to students?</p> <p>Project objectives (e.g. what is the question you want to answer? What do you want to learn how to do? What do you want to find out?):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I wish to find out how homework has affected students and to do this I will gather different opinions from a selection of age groups and professions about how they feel about homework. This will include students, parents, teachers etc.</li> <li>How can homework affect the learning of students - does it add pressure or does it enforce learning?</li> <li>I want to learn how to manage my time well and learn new skills which will benefit me in further education</li> </ul> <p>If it is a group project, what will your responsibilities be?</p> <p>I am working by myself</p>	
Section Two: Reasons for choosing this project	
<p>Reasons for choosing the project (e.g. links to other subjects you are studying, personal interest, future plans, knowledge/skills you want to improve, why the topic is important):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This has always been a topic which has interested me as it never fails to spark a debate, in and out of lessons</li> <li>Justification as to why students have been made to do homework has never been clear in my opinion so to find out the benefits and drawbacks would widen my knowledge on the matter</li> <li>As a student, it is an interest of mine to find out if homework is beneficial. I can give my personal view into this task and also learn new opinions</li> <li>I wish to use the project I create to inform others and also make an impact with the information</li> </ul>	
Section Three: Activities and timescales	
<p>Activities to be carried out during the project (e.g. research, development and analysis of ideas, writing, data collection, numerical analysis, rehearsal techniques, production meetings, production of final outcome, administration, evaluation, preparing for the presentation, etc):</p> <p>Introduction This will be a written introduction in the project document to outline what the project is about and outcomes from the project.</p>	<p>How long this will take:</p> <p>1 week</p>

<p><b>Research - Secondary</b> The secondary research will be used to find out information regarding research of the impact of homework on students which has already been undertaken. This will include finding resources which may have been created by education boards under the government, my school and also information which is given to teachers about this issue. The information which I find will be put into a bibliography and then my review of the information will be put into the project document.</p>	4 weeks
<p><b>Research – Primary</b> This will be a chance for me to gather information from students, parent, teachers etc. via the use of a questionnaire and individual interviews. I hope to interview several teachers and student to gather a wide range of views and opinions to see how the secondary and primary sources compare. I will then organise the information accordingly and write up my findings in the project document.</p>	4 weeks
<p><b>Discussion</b> This will be where I will compare the data and give justifications for the views of both arguments before answering the question based on the evidence produced. This will be where all of the information is linked and my answer finalised.</p>	8 weeks
<p><b>Review</b> This will be a separate document reviewing my finalised answer to the question. I will evaluate what worked well and what could have been improved, what would be done differently next time and what more could have been done.</p>	2 weeks
<p><b>Bibliography</b> Where all the information and sources will be documented.</p>	Continuously updated  1 week left for emergency catch-up
<p><b>Milestone one:</b> Complete research (both secondary and primary) so that the final answer to the question can be started. This will be useful as the research will be the basis for the discussion so the information needs to be correct.</p> <p>Target date (set by tutor-assessor): 14th January 2011</p> <p><b>Milestone two:</b> Complete the document answering the question set so that the review can be started. If the document is checked for flaws I can have feedback on what to improve which will help to make the discussion better and also to have points to put into the review.</p>	

Target date (set by tutor-assessor): 18th March 2011	
Section Four Resources	
What resources will you need for your research, write up and presentation (e.g. libraries, books, journals, technology and equipment, physical, human or financial resources):	
Interviews Mrs T – Science teacher Mr H – Maths teacher Mrs R – English teacher Mr E – Design and Technology teacher R W – GCSE Student J S – GCSE Student J D – Parent A D – Primary School Student Questionnaire to around 10 – 15 students from different age groups	
Secondary information The ATL education union website for documents about homework and research Reports by websites with private research e.g. sciencedaily.com, Iivescience.com Information gathered by AHS about the benefits of homework	
What your areas of research will cover? The areas of research will cover student, parent and teacher opinion. I have tried to choose a wide range of different age ranges and subjects so that the information will vary allowing me to provoke a discussion in the final document. The secondary information will provide information from the official areas so that I may collect data to start the discussion. The private websites will provide their own opinion about this issue which I can use to counter arguments and previously gathered data.	
Comments and agreement from tutor-assessor	
Is the learner taking this project as part of the Diploma? If yes, which Diploma are they taking? Level 2 BTEC Engineering Comments (optional):	<b>Yes/No</b>
Is project derived from work which has been/wilt be submitted for another qualification? Which qualification (title and unit)? Comments (optional):	<b>Yes/No</b>
I confirm that the project is not work which has been or will be submitted for another qualification and is appropriate. Agreed: X	
Comments and agreement from project proposal checker	
Comments (optional): I confirm that the project is appropriate. Agreed: X	



Proposed project title: Is Homework Beneficial To Students?

This form should be used to record the process of your project and be submitted as evidence with the final piece of work.

You may want to discuss:

- what has been done (e.g. from one week or month to the next)
- if you worked in a group, what discussions you had
- any changes to your plans are explained
- what resources you have found
- what problems have been encountered and how did you overcome them

Date/Month	Comments
22/10/10	Target - To work on the introduction of the main document. Outcome - Finished the introduction, project time plan and the proposal form. This was the first major piece of work completed on the project with the time plan and proposal creating the basis of the report.
05/11/10	Target - To create a research record sheet and collect secondary data. Outcome - A research record has been created and two pieces of secondary data have been documented. Finding research in an effective way meant I needed to create a form which would evaluate each source so only useful information would be taken.
26/11/10	Target - Complete secondary research Outcome - The secondary research has been completed and the primary research has been started. I am up to date with my time plan. At this point the secondary research which wanted to collect had been collected, apart from some information about prior research into benefits which had results published.
21/01/11	Target - To complete the primary research so the work can be marked next week Outcome The primary research has been completed and the work can be checked next week After collecting all of the research I was going to start my discussion on time, although I did feel that I had spent too long on the research as there was not enough time for the discussion.
25/03/11	Target- To continue with the discussion Outcome - The discussion is now fully formed and

	alterations need to be made. L03 will be given in next week. The discussion was nearly complete at this point, although I knew I did not leave enough time to complete it. Despite this, I did extra work at home to ensure it would be completed.
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## **Research Record Sheet**

### **Source**

**Title**                    **All work and no play...**

**Url**                      **<http://www.atl.org.uk/publications-and-resources/report/report-2008/all-work-and-no-play-april-2008.asp>**

**What is it?**            **An article which acts as a resource**

**Who produced it?**    **ATL**

**When was it produced?** **April 2008**

### **Information**

#### **What is the source telling you?**

Children are under increasing pressure to perform as homework amounts are increasing. Too much homework is being given and it is stifling children's creativity causing unhappiness, anxiousness and stress. Working class children find it hard to complete homework due to a lack of materials at home and around 90% of teachers feel that children do not complete their homework due to a lack of help and support at home. Parents are putting inappropriate pressure on their children to achieve academically causing stress and friction between family members. Around 70% of homework around primary school age is done by parents instead of their children.

#### **What is its purpose?**

Its purpose is to inform and present a view.

#### **Is it reliable?**

The source has plenty of facts but it is a very biased publication. Other articles on the site are extremely negative towards homework.

#### **How is it useful to answering the question?**

There are plenty of facts and opinions from a wide range of sources. This is a teachers union so the opinions relate to the people that set the work.

#### **What are the source's limitations?**

The source is extremely biased and is clearly against homework so there is little evidence about why homework is beneficial.

### **Other**

Mary Bousted — General Secretary ATL

“Young children are exhausted after a day at school and need time at home to rest, play and be what they are — children”

Dr Susan Hallam - Researcher from the Institute of Education

“Homework only boosts achievement when done in moderate amounts. There is an optimal level, beyond which it produces no benefits at all.”

Dylan Wiliam - Deputy Director of the Institute of Education

“The most effective homework is that which asks pupils to prepare work for a forthcoming lesson. Requiring pupils to ‘finish off’ work not completed in the lesson has little effect, he believes, and yet that appears to be the predominant form of homework set.”

TV Presenter

“I suppose we all think, rather naively, that school today is exactly the same as school back in the '60s, apart from the fact that children are now allowed calculators.’Fraid not. School today is completely different. There’s very little bullying, and no smoking behind the bike sheds, because there’s no time, not when you need to be fluent in 17 languages by four and you’ve got those pesky quadratic cosines to finish off by break.”

### **Research Record Sheet**

#### **Source**

**Title            The Benefits of Homework**

**Url    <http://school.familyeducation.com/homework/experimental-education/38533.html>**

**What is it? An article explaining the benefits of homework**

**Who produced it? FamilyEducation.com/The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.**

**When was it produced? Unknown**

#### **Information**

**What is the source telling you?**



**Url** <http://www.iol.co.za/lifestyle/homework-is-a-waste-of-time-1.626040>

**What is it?** An article against homework

**Who produced it?** IOL

**When was it produced?** February 6th 2010

### **Information**

#### **What is the source telling you?**

The source is stating that homework causes conflicts between parents, teachers and pupils and that there has been no real research that suggests the benefit of homework at primary school level. Pupils have always done the homework because they have always been made to do it, not for the benefits, which from a quote by the author Alfie Kohn of the homework myth, 'what surprised me is not the downside of homework, but the fact that there appears to be no upside at all'. Children should be able to go home and choose what they do in their free time; forcing work on them just dampens their spirit for personal reading and thinking. By setting one piece of work to a class of mixed abilities makes the smart pupils bored and the slightly more disadvantaged students lose even more self confidence when they can't complete the task.

#### **What is its purpose?**

The purpose of the source was to present an authors opinion of homework, to publicise a new book and to give out an opinion from the author of the article.

#### **Is it reliable?**

The source is an internet site which presents many different articles based on lifestyle and is a popular site, meaning it is somewhat reliable. The author Alfie Kohn has frequent lectures around America and has created 10 books on related topics about social behaviour. This makes his information more reliable as he is well known and his books have a lot of research to back up his claims. There is also a viewpoint of a professor from the institute of education in London who backs up Kohn's point about the lack a benefits a primary school age.

#### **How is it useful to answering the question?**

The source is useful as it gives a view which can be backed up by evidence and has reliable people giving information.

#### **What are the source's limitations?**

The sources limitations are that i&i states that there is a lack of benefits at primary school age but no further explanation onto further education, and if there were any benefits then at all.

## **Other**

"Just as adults face the twin certainties of death and taxes, school pupils face the daily grind of homework"

"What surprised me is not the downside of homework, but the fact that there appears to be no upside at all," says Kahn

"Children aren't vending machines such that we put in more homework and get out more learning, " says Kohn, who has stimulated a major debate in education circles in the US.

## **Research Record Sheet**

### **Source**

**Title**                      **Teachers call for a ban on homework**

**Url**                         **<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/7287962.stm>**

**What is it?**                **A news article on the BBC website**

**Who produced it?**        **The BBC news team**

**When was it produced?** **Monday 10th March 2008**

### **Information**

What is the source telling you?

Teachers are calling for ban on primary school homework as it is making children unhappy due to being unable to complete it because of their background. It suggests a cycle or resistance may be put into place if children regularly fail to achieve targets because of the difficulty in completing it. It also suggests that many feel homework is a waste of time and teachers only set the work to meet guidelines set by the government. Guidelines about the amount of homework which should be done suggest that 5 year olds should do one hour a week of homework building up to 150 minutes at 16. Pressure is placed upon students causing them to be unhappy and anxious. Despite all this the source does suggest that children can benefit if they have a well structured homework plan as it builds their confidence on a subject.

### **What is its purpose?**

To inform the readers about different opinions related to homework.

### **Is it reliable?**

The source is reliable as the BBC is a very well known news company. There is also a range of opinions from the leader for the association of teacher and

lecturers along with the spokesman from the department of children, schools and families.

### **How is it useful to answering the question?**

There is a lot of information which gives opinions to both sides of the arguments with quotes from people with a high standing in their departments. There is fact as well as opinion which will be useful to quote in the final document.

### **What are the source's limitations?**

There is not much factual evidence in explaining why homework is beneficial so it is a biased report.

### **Other**

Mary Bousted — Union leader of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers

"I think a lot of homework is a waste of time. The teacher has got to set it, so what gets set is 'busy' homework,"

Spokesman — Department for Children, Families and Schools

"A good, well-organised homework programme helps children and young people to develop the skills and attitudes they will need for successful, independent, lifelong learning."

BBC Information — "The government says that homework is not compulsory but it is encouraged as a key part of the learning process.

Its guidelines for schools in England say children should be doing homework from the day they start school, rising from one hour a week at five, to 90 to 150 minutes a day at 16.

They say 10 and 11-year-olds should be doing half an hour of homework every day."

### **UK Government Guidelines for homework**

#### **Homework guidelines for primary and secondary schools**

The emphasis is on how homework helps your child to learn, rather than on whether it takes a certain amount of time.

For example, some children will work quicker than others and get more done in less time.

The rough guidelines for primary school children are:

- Years 1 and 2: one hour per week
- Years 3 and 4: 1.5 hours per week

- Years 5 and 6: 30 minutes per day

The guidelines for secondary school children are:

- Years 7 and 8: 45 to 90 minutes per day
- Year 9: one to two hours per day
- Years 10 and 11: 1.5 to 2.5 hours per day

Your child shouldn't be expected to spend much longer on homework than the guide times. It doesn't matter if activities don't take as long as the guide times as long as they are useful. Schools should organise homework carefully so that children aren't asked to do too much on any one day.

### **Homework activities**

All homework activities should be related to work that children are doing at school. However, homework should not always be written work. For younger children it will largely be:

- reading with parents or carers
- informal games to practice mathematical skills

For older children homework activities may include:

- reading
- preparing a presentation to the class
- finding out information
- making something
- trying out a simple scientific experiment
- cooking

### **Interview Guidelines**

**Name: GN**

**Age: 35-45**

**Profession: Teacher**

**Why do you think homework is given to students?** For a variety of reasons some honourable others less so e.g. historical. At certain times of the year and when time is short, homework may be necessary to enable the student to complete a task or even demonstrate ability. Governors and educationalists seem to feel that if a school has a good record of setting homework tasks then it directly relates to performance and standards being enhanced — questionable.

**Do you see any problems with homework?** Designing posters seems a bit pointless and takes up student time whilst being quick and easy to assess.

**What benefits do you think homework has?** Enabling students to work with their parents to foster a greater understanding of a tasks requirements and to encourage independence and self determination. Those who can push themselves and take on a greater workload are more likely to be academically successful. Without homework would tv, internet and gaming not become even more pervasive and time consuming activities?

**At what age should children be given homework?** Limited amount at primary and only if of value. Better none than a menial task.

**How much homework should be given to students?** Varies greatly but for a number of students it may be preferable to retain them at school, so they don't have to deal with the stress of locating resources and finding the time and space to study. Individual assessment of worth would be better than just increasing hourly rate as a student progresses through primary and secondary schooling.

**Any extra information you would like to add about the topic of homework** — Coursework homework may be preferable in certain subjects although have been issues with witnessing work is the students. Large group sizes and regular homework requiring marking can lead to teachers being overloaded and then not able to effectively prepare and perform (teach!!). VLE online assessments seem a good idea as a score is recorded but who can guarantee the student wasn't helped!

Permission given to use information Yes

## **Interview**

**Name RW**

**Age 16**

**Profession GCSE Student**

**Why do you think homework is given to students?**

Mainly because the governments tells the teachers to give out the homework. Also, it can be to consolidate work that has been taught in the lesson so that we understand it if we didn't in class.

**Do you see any problems with homework?**

It takes up a lot of free time and also lots of teachers give homework which has to be typed up or researched online and it is easy to get distracted. Also, not everyone has access to some of the resources which we need to access to complete the homework!

**What benefits do you think homework has?**

If you don't understand something in lessons researching it is always helpful. If it is compulsory research about something you already know about it is pretty useless.

**At what age should children be given homework?**

Homework should be given as catch up in secondary schools. In primary schools you should be skipping around and playing with custard rather than having to worry about homework.

**How much homework should be given to students?**

Secondary school students should get about an hour a week in each subject. They are expecting us to do 4 hours of homework a night and not all of us have 4 hours at home a night to do homework. So we stay up late to do the homework and then get shouted at for being tired at school. So overall, less homework would be beneficial to our education.

**General information about homework from the person you are interviewing.**

I think that we defiantly get too much homework although it is good practice to get into encase you get extra work to do at home from your workplace. Take revision, I didn't have to do revision before year 11 but now I am struggling because I don't know how to revise, I never needed to!

Permission given to use information yes

**Interview**

**Name AD**

**Age 10**

**Profession Student**

**Why do you think homework is given to students?**

We get given homework so that we can prove that we can do our work at home without anybody else's help.

**Do you see any problems with homework?**

Sometimes, some of the other kids make their mum or dad or older brother or sister do the homework for them or cheat and make themselves look smarter at school. Also, I sometimes forget or just can't be bothered to do homework. Sometimes it is too easy and sometimes it is too hard for me to do and I get in trouble for not doing the homework.

**What benefits do you think homework has?**

I am really happy when I manage to complete a really hard question by myself and it shows that I understand the work we are doing.

**At what age should children be given homework?**

Children should be given homework when they go to secondary school because they have more subjects and have to start working hard as they have important exams at the end of secondary school.

**How much homework should be given to students?**

I think one or two bits of homework a week are enough because I sometimes forget to do work and if I have too much then I will get under pressure.

**General information about homework from the person you are interviewing.**

I used to like homework when I first got it at it was new and interesting, but now it's just another chore like school. I think that the smart kids should get harder work and if you can't do the homework then the teacher should help and maybe the parents as long as they don't do the work for you.

Permission given to use information yes

**Interview**

**Name JD**

**Age 39**

**Profession Mother**

**Why do you think homework is given to students?**

Because the government tells them to give it out, the teachers have to. Although, it can be helpful if the children have to try and reinforce learning.

**Do you see any problems with homework?**

So many! Every day after school I ask my son if he has any homework and the automatic reply is no, even if he has some. It is really hard to try and make him do the homework and it leads to so many arguments. Also, most of the homework requires the internet and if you don't have the Internet at home, what are you supposed to do?

**What benefits do you think homework has?**

As my son doesn't usually do the homework, he won't be getting any benefits. I suppose the theory is to make sure that what they learnt at school sinks in and also to promote individual learning. When I was at school I don't think it ever

helped me, but for others having the chance to go over work at their own pace helped them.

### **At what age should children be given homework?**

I think they should be given homework when they go into secondary school as they are older and should have more responsibility. During primary, however, the kids just want to go outside and play when they get home from school, not do more work.

### **How much homework should be given to students?**

I think about half an hour to an hour a night maximum, otherwise children will not sit down long enough to do their homework, get distracted and then panic the day the homework is due in because they couldn't be bothered to do it.

### **General information about homework from the person you are interviewing.**

My experience with homework as a former student and mother has not been good, but I can understand why it is given out.

Permission given to use information yes

### **Source Evaluation**

Throughout the secondary research, my opinions on the reliability and bias are given, although not in depth. This is an evaluation of the reliability and bias of the sources in more detail, along with the reliability and bias of the primary sources.

The secondary sources which have been collected have varying amounts of reliability. For example, the source created by the BBC would be more reliable for information as it is a corporation which is a major news site in the UK with knowledge and facts, compared to a source one created by a student who despises homework and might give false facts lowering reliability — although this would be an opinion and may also be useful in the discussion.

Most of the secondary sources have bias towards their viewpoint, either for or against homework, but all have research and evidence to back up their views. A few add only half of the information, for example in 'homework is a waste of time' it explains that there is no benefits in primary but does not expand onto secondary schools. This is clear evidence of bias, as when information is left out of reports it is to make sure that the creator of the source has a bigger influence on the reader as no information can contradict what has been said.

The primary research has many differing opinions gathered from interviews in a simple question and answer format with the chance to add any extra information which may have wanted to be given by the interviewee. The reliability of

interviews varies, for example, the students interviewed could dislike homework to a point where even if benefits had occurred they would not be spoken of them, as the distaste to homework is so high. Again, this is a case of opinion and is still useful when adding opinions to an argument, although both the bias makes the interview low in reliability.

Using differing ages and people from different connections to homework made the response more varied and would mean that I would have more opinions and information to use during the discussion stage, rather than the same kind of opinions repeated which would create a biased and dull report.

## **Is homework beneficial to students?**

### **Introduction**

Homework, defined as schoolwork which is to be completed outside of the classroom. It's surprising at how a task which looks simple on the surface can be the spark which lights the fuse of many debates, arguments and potential stress to every person involved. Go out and ask anyone about homework, it will be hard to find someone who has not got their own opinion about this topic. So, I have decided to create a report which will shed some light on the matter with fact and opinion from the relevant parties concerned; is homework actually beneficial to students? To complete the task I will be gathering information from official documents and research about the effects of homework, along with student and teacher interviews and opinions. The secondary and primary information will be evaluated and then compared to create an answer to the question.

As a student, homework is a day to day task which I get given on most school days from a variety of different subjects. Some examples of the types of homework which I usually receive are analysing poems for English, solving a bunch of quadratic equations for maths and translating my weekend into German. On average, every night I receive about two to three pieces ranging from ten minutes to a few hours in length and they can be due either in the next day or as far as a few weeks. Whilst I do find homework to be useful at confirming that I understand the information learned in the lesson, most of the homework tends to be 'homework for the sake of homework'. As schools are supposed to give out a certain amount of information each week, teachers have to give out homework even if they don't feel the need to, and thus pupils receive homework which has no benefit.

### **Unhappiness, anxiousness and stress**

Not surprisingly, the internet has a huge source of opinions and from the briefest Google search, it was clear that one of the main problems with the task of homework was stress. Children are now under an increasing pressure to perform due to league tables becoming more important to the schools than the students

individual capability, with the school ethos that more homework equals higher achievement. Unfortunately, the myth that more homework increases achievement has never been confirmed, so it becomes hard to understand why homework is given out so much.

According to the ATL, homework is stifling children's creativity causing unhappiness, anxiousness and stress. Children need time once they get home from school to rest, play and have time to peruse any creative activities which they would enjoy. Homework, it seems, needs to be done in moderate amounts, as beyond a certain point, any benefits which may have been achieved are extinguished.

Alfie Kohn is an author of many books which challenges the accepted social behaviour, including the "homework myth". His report explores the current use of homework and how it has been affecting students. Alfie Kohn stated the "Children aren't vending machines such that we put more homework in and get out more learning" and he was not surprised at the downsides of homework illuminated by his research, "but the fact that there appears to be no upside at all." He also further expands explaining that one of the reasons for the stress and unhappiness caused by homework is that the teachers themselves can be setting the wrong type of homework which only suits certain students at certain levels within the class, leaving smart pupils bored and disadvantaged students with even less confidence when they struggle to complete a task.

### **How much is too much?**

According to government guidelines the amount of homework which should be given out starting from years 1 and 2 is an hour per week, gradually increasing until secondary when the recommendation becomes 2.5 hours per day in years 10 and 11. The normal school day finishes at around 3:00, although many schools recommend extracurricular activities after school which can last from 3:00 until 4:00 – 4:30. The child would then have to go home and have dinner, pushing the time up to around 5:30. Even after a six hour school day, the child would then have to complete a further 2.5 hours of homework. So by 8:00, give or take a few hours depending on the child's routine, the homework would be complete, giving them hardly any time to wind down and relax after a long day.

This progresses onto the teachers and their attitude towards homework. A recent report by the BBC suggests that many feel homework is a waste of time and teachers only set the work to meet government guidelines. This can cause "busy homework", where teachers set menial tasks which have no real benefit just to meet national requirements. Many students also feel that this is the case. A GCSE student stated that she felt "homework is given to students because the government tells them to." And that the main type of homework set is research on topics which are already known which is "pretty useless."

What makes this even more interesting is it is not just the students which think this; it is also parents and teachers. A mother of a primary school student also thought homework was given out "because the government tells them to." And that the amount of homework given out can induce stress when a child either forgets that they have homework due or just can't complete it. Graham Knight, A teacher at Alton College, also appears to have doubts with the direct proportion of more homework equalling better grades. He states that "Governors and educationalists seem to feel that if a school has a good record of setting homework tasks then it directly relates to performance and standards being enhanced — questionable." And that "Large group sizes and regular homework requiring marking can lead to teachers being overloaded and then not being able to effectively prepare and perform."

### **The home environment**

For many, the work is not a problem, yet the home in homework is. In the modern day family, many parents are now working full time, unable to give time and attention towards their children who may be seeking it to help with their task from school. Finding the right environment to work in can be a challenge causing the child to be unable to complete their homework causing arguments between teachers, parents and pupils when they fail to deliver. Some children may also find that they do not have the resources at home to complete the work, stated by the ATL with 90% of teachers feeling that children do not complete their homework due to a lack of support and help at home. This is also suggested by the GCSE student. "A lot of homework has to be typed up and researched online which in itself is an easy distraction. Also, not everyone has access to some of the resources which we need to access to complete work!"

The parents also appear to have a negative effect on the children's opinions of work. Around 70% of homework around primary school age is completed by the children's parents instead of themselves. This can be due to the parents putting extreme pressure on their children to achieve academically and them feeling that it would be best for them to do the work so their children can appear to be talented within certain subjects. This can cause other students to lose the drive to complete their homework after seeing their peers work being completed to a higher standard than theirs or even anger that their parents won't do the same. A primary school student sees this as a disadvantage to homework as 'Sometimes, some of the other kids make their mum or dad or older brother or sister do the homework for them or cheat to make themselves look smarter at school.' This is saddening, when he believes the reason why you are given homework is "so that we can prove that we can do our work at home without anybody else's help." Even teachers cannot guarantee that student's are not helped by others to complete work, with written work on computers erasing the hardest hurdle to overcome before whilst cheating — handwriting. Now, children can type up work with help or even written by someone else and will probably be

able to get away with it, making the teacher's task of assessing how the students are coping with the work a lot harder.

Argument can also be caused by homework at home between parents and their children. For the mother of a primary school student she knows this too well. "Every day after school I ask my son if he has any homework and the automatic reply is no even if he has some. It is really hard to make him do the homework and it leads to so many arguments.'

### **Overall...**

It seems that for many the amount of homework, the reasons why it is set and the unsuited home environments leads to many different reasons as to why homework appears to have no benefits and it becomes easy to understand why there is such an objection towards it. It seems that less homework is needed and it should only be set when it is beneficial to the student's studies rather than the government's expectations, to save children's time which does not need to be wasted on menial tasks.

### Motivation, independence and responsibility

Whilst homework has negatives, without positives the work would not be given out. Dylan William, the deputy director of the institute of education explained that when done in moderate amounts, homework boosts achievement. This means that setting homework when necessary will have a positive effect on the student with having less pressure from unnecessary homework and increasing their level of achievement. This means that the homework itself is not always the problem, it can be the amount set. Considering the government guidelines for the current amount of homework which should be set during the day should be revised so that students will get the maximum that they can out of doing the task.

Homework's main attraction is the promise that it helps extend learning and develops a student into an independent and mature member of society. A spokesman for the department for children, families and schools told the BBC that "A good, well-organised homework programme helps children and young people to develop the skills and attitudes they will need for successful, independent, lifelong learning." The main point is that homework should be structured and planned so that it allows students to do tasks which will be beneficial to them in the particular subject. Once that is achieved, the child can develop the skills and attitudes which are needed in the workplace. This opinion is also widespread, with many coming to the same conclusion that homework is a way to motivate, increase self motivation, responsibility and independence.

As well as creating well rounded individuals homework can also be used as an effective way of revising, especially when a student reaches years 10 and 11 as exams are the key focus. A year 11 student said that she thought it was a good

source for revision. "I didn't have to do revision before year 11 but now I am struggling because I don't know how to revise, I never needed to." The homework works as a tool which can be set so that key points of the subject can be understood further and revised to increase the chance of success when exams are taken.

### **Communication**

When children bring homework home from a young age one of the first people they ask for help is usually their parents. "We call our homework "Homelinks" because it's the link between home and school," explained by Peg Sand, a kindergarten teacher. She goes on to add that "Through Homelinks, parents have an opportunity to reinforce learning [and] become involved in their child's education." Most parents are usually interested in how their child is progressing and how they could help them to do well at school. Many are also unsure about how their child's day went and homework provides a valuable link between the parent and the child to have time when they can talk. Of course, this would only work up to a certain age group as after primary school independent learning will be encouraged so the child can prove to themselves that they can do the work themselves.

The communication between the parent and the child can be hugely beneficial, with more and more different ways to communicate without actually talking; the time to talk whilst working on homework would become an opportunity for parents to connect with them. Without homework, it seems that activities like gaming, using the internet and watching TV would become all-encompassing and time consuming meaning outside of school self motivation to complete any tasks or communicate with anyone would become harder to achieve for the student.

### **Reinforcing learning**

Outside of school, all the distractions of the outside world may prevent a student from wishing to extend their interest into what has been taught at school or stop them from doing any individual revision or learning which they might want to do. By using homework as a way to extend learning outside of the classroom it allows the mind of a student to be aware of what they are learning and go over work at their own pace. It also tests if they can complete the work outside of the classroom environment and if they actually understand the work. This can be useful to the teachers as well as the students as it assesses how the child is coping with the work and the subject.

A primary school student gave his opinion on the benefits of homework. "I am really happy when I manage to complete a really hard question by myself and it shows that I understand the work we are doing." Homework not only boosts self esteem when work is completed but it demonstrates to the student that they do understand the topic and gives them self confidence, possibly improving their work ethos in class. Even if the student doesn't quite understand the work,

homework can be set to research various topics, allowing a sense of understanding to build. This also encourages different revision techniques to develop, allowing a student to individually collate information and understand it at their own pace so they can feel more confident when exams are introduced.

### **The benefits**

Homework can prove to be a beneficial task for students, parents and teachers, allowing for the progress of the student to be followed closely and to increase communication between parents and their children. If understood, homework can build skills which are vital for the workplace and encourages students to develop techniques which are needed to succeed in revision for exams — that is, if done in moderation.

### **In conclusion**

Homework can be beneficial to students when used correctly. It can be used as a tool to aid revision, track progress and encourage communication. Unfortunately, the benefits which can be gained are not always realised as the current structure for homework and the amount given out is not always balanced, causing more negatives than positives for the student, untimely causing homework to become a task which has no benefit at all. The research has altered my viewpoint on the subject of homework as I now have a better understanding on the vast range of benefits which it actually has, mainly due to how it helps with revision which is of great interest to me at the point which I am at in my education. Homework is beneficial to students only when used in moderation and it can build skills which will support the student for years to come.

### **Project review**

My project objective was to find out how homework affects students, if it adds pressure or reinforces learning and how I manage my time when working on a project which has milestones and deadlines. Throughout the project I found out how homework can affect students in so many different ways, both positive and negative, from communication at home to potential success in exams. I also found out how pressure can lead onto stress and more, yet it also reinforces learning, so what I thought would have a definite answer turned out to be a complete mix of variations depending on circumstances.

The information which was gathered was mostly useful, although some of the information did lack support from research. However, due to the nature of the project which allowed for information, facts and opinions, all information was a value to some extent within the discussion. The best information which was sourced was interviews from different people at different stages in and out of education. It allowed confirmation of some of the secondary sources as well as providing insight into the views of homework from people outside of the point of

education where I am currently at. I would have liked to collect further information about studies which have been carried out with statistics which could be used as string facts in the discussion, but unfortunately there seemed to be a lack of available evidence.

After completing the discussion, my main findings became clear and somewhat surprising. What I didn't realise about homework and its benefits are that the benefits and disadvantages not only come from homework itself. Life at home, the ability to have access to the correct equipment and the relationship between the child and parent also play a huge part on how much a student will actually gain from completing tasks set. There are absolute benefits, such as developing skills key for effective revision and allowing work and topics to be set in stone for a student. However, homework is not being used effectively enough (and in some cases not correctly) as a tool to help aid students, rather it is seen as a necessity — which is not benefiting anyone.

The advantage of researching this topic and coming to the conclusion that I did was that it gave me an insight to homework which has allowed me to not only understand why it is given, but has allowed me to use homework more effectively at home. The findings also demonstrate different techniques which could be put into place to help homework be more beneficial. The disadvantages of the discussion is that there is not enough factual evidence on the actual benefits of homework, whilst there are suggestions as to how it can help, no 'real' research was available to me where I searched causing the discussion to become slightly one sided.

Overall, for the project I feel I did manage to complete it to a standard which I was happy with, however my time scale for how long I thought it would take to write up the discussion was not correct, causing me to rush. I feel that if I were to do this task again, I would take a few weeks off of the research to complete the discussion more effectively. I should have also made the discussion more balanced, even though I had more negatives than positives in my research. This is also something which I should have considered, looking out further to find more positives which could have made the discussion much more interesting.

Now that I have completed the discussion I feel that it has been a hugely beneficial piece of work which has helped me understand how I manage my time and how I cope with an open ended task. It will help me in the future by not making impossible deadlines which can't be reached so that work can be finished on time to a high quality standard. I will also try and plan out what research I would like to collect at the start of the project in more detail to make sure that all the information that I would need will be able to support me during work.