

## Homework and Home-Learning

Research on the effectiveness of homework as an instructional tool is highly inconclusive for elementary school children. In other words, homework, at best “maybe” helps an elementary school aged child academically. Yet, so much time and effort is taken up by this practice.

Teachers, children, and their families spend hours planning, preparing, completing, returning, grading and recording homework. At NMIS, we focus our time and efforts on creating effective in-class experiences, and seek to use “homework” as an effective review and extension activity for the child. The assignment of homework to students is limited according to the table below.

For young children (K-4th grade), homework should not be a vehicle to introduce new materials or topics, but rather used to reinforce topics or skills previously or recently acquired by the student. However, older students (5th-8th grade) might have homework that includes investigating topics prior to instruction in class.

In general, homework assignments should be limited to activities such as:

- Independent reading of student self-selected materials (e.g. independent reading logs).
- Practice of rote math facts (e.g. flash cards).
- Practice of sight words or sound/phoneme practice.
- Completion of math algorithms already taught in class or previous grade level (e.g. basic math worksheets).
- Review of vocabulary a student is expected to already know
- Assigned reading on a topic recently or previously covered in class.
- Reviewing notes taken on past lessons.
- Investigating or collecting materials on topics or information recently covered in class.
- Practicing a musical instrument (violin in K-5, violin/viola/cello/bass in 6-8): the school will provide an instrument for in-school usage, but parents are obligated to provide an instrument for at-home nightly practice.

In general, when homework is assigned it is reviewed the subsequent day in class (with the exception of such activities as flash card practice or independent reading). For homework in violin/orchestra class, students will need an instrument at home. Families are encouraged to rent (rather than purchase) an instrument for home because as students grow, the size of the instrument will change.

When it comes to introducing new materials, most research suggests that in-class study is much more effective than homework for young children. However, this trend starts to change as the child increases in age and maturity level.

While all students are different in the amount of time it takes to complete a task, the below guidelines are used by teachers as they send assignments home for completion. The times indicated are not meant to be limits a student is expected to work on an assignment, but rather are what the teacher believes it should take the average child to complete the homework. Parents are urged to not have children simply stop working on an assignment if the child is taking longer than the time indicated. Rather, parents are encouraged to communicate with the teacher if they find that their child is regularly spending much more time on homework than the below times indicate.

Grade <i>Click links below for more detail on grade levels' homework plans.</i>	Approximate total # minutes of homework a child is to do per night	Should homework be used to introduce new material?
<a href="#">Kindergarten</a>	0 minutes	No
<a href="#">First Grade</a>	10 minutes	No
<a href="#">Second Grade</a>	20 minutes	No
<a href="#">Third Grade</a>	30 minutes	No
<a href="#">Fourth Grade</a>	40 minutes	Rarely
<a href="#">Fifth Grade</a>	50 minutes	Sometimes
<a href="#">Sixth Grade</a>	60 minutes	Yes
<a href="#">Seventh Grade</a>	70 minutes	Yes
<a href="#">Eighth Grade</a>	80 minutes	Yes

As an IB school, teachers should not use time limitations on homework to stifle a child's natural instinct of independent curiosity and inquiry however. Activities along this nature, however, are to be promoted as optional, not resulting in an assignment to turn in, etc.

Additionally, sometimes a student fails to complete work that has been scheduled to be completed in class that day. Such additional work may be sent home for the child to complete that evening, and is not subject to the limitations on homework described above.

See the articles below for more specific information on homework expectations per grade level:

[K-3rd Grade Homework Plan](#)

[4-5th Grade Homework Plan](#)

[Middle School Homework Plan](#)