



## IN Focus

### HOMEWORK & HOME-WORK/CHORE

**Academic Homework** at the end of a school day, is almost a given! While each teacher may feel she has given 1 homework to a class, the kids in the same class may have received 5 homework items from the varied subject teachers! Each teacher would have also stressed on the urgency of the timeline for completion!

When appropriately designed, spaced and implemented, HW offers several benefits for students.

- Reinforcement of Learning
- Development of Responsibility and Time Management Skills
- Opportunity for Feedback and Improvement
- Promotion of Self-Directed Learning
- Connection Between School and Home
- Preparation for Assessments
- *And*, Preparation for Higher Education and Workforce

At the same time, **Home-work** or **Home Chores** also play a crucial role in the development of children. They are essential for teaching children valuable life skills, instilling important values, promoting independence in managing without adult assistance, as well as developing their well-being to be a balanced happy person - *a key for the future!*

- Sense of Contribution
- Life Skills Development
- Responsibility and Accountability
- Respect for family members
- Self-Esteem and Confidence
- Teamwork and Cooperation
- Empathy and Compassion
- Preparation for Adulthood:
- Family Bonding
- Appreciation for Effort

Overall, motivating children to help with home chores promotes a positive family environment with love, understanding, sharing & peace.

## WONDER WORDS

**ASSIGNMENT:** a job or type of work that one is given to do usually by a person in authority.

**CHORE:** implies a minor routine activity necessary for maintaining a household or work place.

**DUTY:** an obligation to perform or responsibility for performance.

**EXERCISE:** a controlled and guided practice or an activity describes in which learners work towards a goal .

**EXPECTATION:** a belief that someone will do something with his/her own initiative, without being prodded.

**JOB:** work voluntarily performed for need or money; it may sometimes require a specific skill set.

**STINT:** a carefully allotted or measured quantity of assigned work or service.

**TASK:** work imposed by a person in authority or an employer or by circumstance.

**WORK :** something which needs physical or mental effort, in order to earn money or to achieve something.

“I like a teacher who gives you something to take home to think about, besides homework.”

— Lily Tomlin

## QED Talk

### 3 perspectives on **HOMEWORK & HOME CHORES!**

#### STAKEHOLDER 1: EDUCATIONIST & MENTOR

##### SHARMISHTHA CHAWDA

Founder- Master Spellers, Young Orators, Higher Education Consultant



#### ■ Remembering your schooldays, did you have HW? What in your opinion is the origin of homework?

Our school days were not very different from today's times. We had homework but it focussed on practice of subjects like Math and Science. We had one creative writing (mostly an essay) every week and were still left with a lot of time to read and play with friends. I remember devoting an hour to homework between 7 to 8 pm that was always *after playtime in the neighbourhood and before dinner*. Homework was our *silent hour* when the whole family sat around the dining table, children doing homework and parents, reading.

I believe conceptually homework is a *potent time* to *connect with your subjects in your own way and at your own pace*. However, its essence seems to have been lost over the years. I have seen students simple copying paragraphs from textbooks into notebooks mindlessly. The purpose of individual study time is defeated, when the *expectations of schools are reduced to robotic writing* by the students. Schools need to employ *creative methods of making homework an enriching engagement* rather than a tedious task.

Homework can be a valuable tool if aligned well and in the right measure.

#### ■ Do all schools typically give HW everyday? How much time per day should a child spend on HW, say for levels - (a) Foundational (b) Preparatory (c) Middle (d) Secondary?

I have observed closely that most schools do give homework every day. Unfortunately, this has given rise to more and more children going to tuition classes, primarily where they end up completing their homework with the assistance from the tuition teacher. This adds to a burdensome routine for children and they are *deprived of quality free time*.

As a parent and an educator, I am a vehement *advocate of a free mind* that nurtures *creativity*. I believe there must be **no 'homework'** in the *foundational* and *preparatory years*. Children must leave their academic work behind in schools and *explore hobbies* during off-school hours. Homework must be **gradually be initiated towards the end of preparatory years**. Having said that, it is imperative to *change the nature of homework*. Homework must be used to *foster self-study and discipline* as this will build a robust foundation for them for their middle and secondary years. It will make them independent learner and not reliant on tuitions.

#### ■ The NEP stresses upon the learning being 'meaningful!' To what extent is the nature of HW assigned today truly 'meaningful'?

This question brings me the most important aspect of homework. Today, *Homework connotes monotony, burden and burnout*. This perception must change. The NEP, if implemented appropriately, has the potential to bring about a refreshing change on the way parents and students view homework. **The NEP emphasises on a holistic approach that encapsulates creativity, critical thinking and problem solving**. When homework is complementary to school work: for example, when a concept is being introduced in classwork and *when students are expected to find its practical application as their homework, that is when learning becomes meaningful*. With approach homework will undergo a paradigm shift and will be not only engaging for young learners but also make them independent and curious seekers of knowledge.

#### ■ Do all subjects need HW? If so, what kind of HW should be assigned?

All subjects need homework *as long as homework is not centred around rote learning and mindless writing*. Homework if rightly aligned can be a *fun-hour for students*. It is important for schools to take cognizance of the **quantity of homework** that the child is being given from school. I remember a time when my children would bring back homework for every subject and it would exhaust them. *Educators need to coordinate with other subject teachers to monitor the quantum of homework* being given to the students. I reiterate here that the **nature of homework must change to become more exploratory and meaningful**.



Genius is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration. As a result, a genius is often a talented person who has simply done all of his homework.

- Thomas A Edison

■ **What is your view about children engaging in home chores? Which 3 home-chore skills do you feel all gender kids MUST learn and know for a comfortable adult life?**

Focussing on inculcating *life skills in children through household chores* is one of the most *powerful tools of raising responsible and empathetic individuals*. We are living in a world that desperately needs a fine balance between IQ (*read: intelligent quotient*) and EQ (*read: emotional quotient*). The race of academic success often *overlooks the importance of compassion and kindness*.

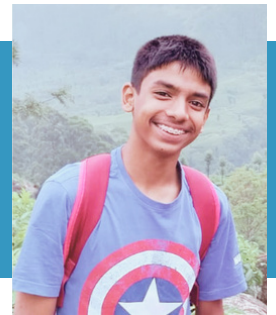
The benefits of contributing towards your home are intangible and far-sighted. Simple daily chores like clearing the table, putting away your books, helping with the laundry over weekends or even running quick errands to an adjacent provision store help in strengthening family bonds. These are baby steps towards *an equitable world where the head and heart will always strike a harmonious chord*.

■ **Your final words...**

I think many parents have taken the saying "*An idle mind is a devil's workshop*" a little too literally! This has resulted in kids suffering exhausting daily schedules with School HW, activities and tuition classes, back to back! A little bit of idle time is *food for the soul!* Homework is a '*Me Time*' for children. Let us invest wisely into it. And if we can't, let them have their "*Free Time*". \*\*\*

## STAKEHOLDER 2: STUDENT

Tristan D'Souza  
(Grade 9)



■ **What is your first reaction to HW? What kind of HW would you enjoy?**

When I hear the word "*homework*" I feel it is a burden that takes up a lot of my time. I'd enjoy life more if there was *less HW* given.

■ **Do you think the HW you receive across all subjects helps you with learning?**

Hmmm, well yes, the HW received from all the subjects helps me in learning to some extent. It sort of structures one's revision & extra learning.

■ **How often do your parent/s sit with you for HW? How do they contribute?**

My parents don't sit with me to help me with my HW - but thats because I dont need it; I am quite independent in that. I only ask my parents for help with my HW when I don't understand something, some concept or Qs.

■ **Do you help out with home-chores & duties? If so, what kind of chores do you complete without prodding / reminders?**

Yes, of course ...as if mom would have it any other way! But I am quite okay with helping out; like, I clean the rooms, take the trash, shop & wash dishes.

■ **In addition to HW & chores, do you enjoy time for hobbies & other interest?**

Due to the immense amount of HW and due to attending many after-school classes, I really don't get a lot of free time. But with whatever I get, I try and make the best of it, by reading, watching TV or engaging in art.

■ **Your final words....**

My final words are that though HW is important, life would be a bit more fun and free if we weren't burdened with so much of it. \*\*\*





## STAKEHOLDER 3: PARENT

Melita D'Souza

Co-ordinator, Gujarat Research Society, Mumbai



### ■ Remembering your schooldays, did you have HW? What did you feel about it?

Oh yes, in my school days we got homework, almost every day! I remember *not* being too happy about it as it hardly left me with any free time. And at that age, you know how there is just sooo much to do with friends!

### ■ How often do you sit with your kid/s for their HW? How do you contribute?

I sit with my younger son almost every day, just to make sure that he has understood what was done in school and to make sure that his notes etc. are complete. My older son manages with his HW on his own, and only asks for help if he has trouble with something.

### ■ Does the HW your child receive these days really help for lifelong & meaningful learning?

Yes, the HW my child receives helps for lifelong and meaningful learning as it not only helps him retain and understand the subject matter better but it also makes him more responsible; while teaching time management and prioritization.

### ■ Does your child engage in home chores? What kind of chores? Do you think it is important?

Yes, both my sons have their share of household chores like - cleaning, doing the dishes occasionally, watering the plants and going to the store/market, to name a few. I think it is important to get children involved in home chores as these skills help to make them *self-reliant*, it makes them more *responsible*; they learn vital life/survival skills. What's more, engaging in home chores makes them feel that they are a valued member of the family, while making them understand the importance of pitching in.

### ■ How about YOUR 'me time', hobbies, fun activities, etc - after the daily HW and after school activity runs, duties for kids and mundane home chores?

With helping my younger son with his HW, taking him for his classes and the household chores, I honestly get very little time to pursue my hobbies and other interests, but I do manage to find time to read or play a song or two on the piano. I do squeeze in some time, although not frequently, for my other hobbies when I feel that internal, explosive rush to be creative!

### ■ Your final words....

I think it's very important for children to develop skills and hobbies that they can carry on through life, so HW be it from school or tuition classes should not hold them back. They must learn to strike a balance. \*\*\*



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Here are some **Homework** related posts:



October '22 | **PODCAST**  
Making Homework 'Work'  
- Part 1



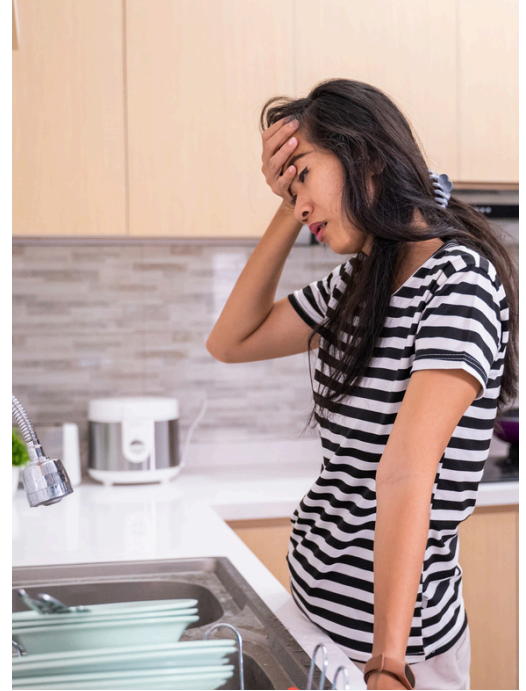
October '22 | **BLOG**  
Making Homework 'Work'  
- Part 2

## CHILDREN'S INVOLVEMENT IN HOME CHORES

Our lives as parents are increasingly busy these days and sometimes it's hard to find time to accomplish everything around the house. One way to balance work and play is to *combine them* and *involve the whole family* in doing household chores. If we understand *what gets in the way* and *what may help when it comes to doing chores*, then we can have a better chance of having children be participating family members.

### What discourages kids from helping out at home?

- **Unclear expectations.** Children need to understand what the chore is and what we expect of them. Be clear about what is considered a job well done: doing the dishes or simply a "good try?"
- **Inconsistency.** When it comes to chores, any previous effort to establish expectations can get derailed by inconsistency. Think carefully before saying, "I guess you can skip feeding the dog this morning; I'll do it." And if parents or caregivers don't agree on what is expected of children, when to make exceptions, or aren't equally adept at refusing to give in to child procrastination or defiance, children usually figure out how to divide and conquer.
- **Time.** It takes time to teach children *how to do chores and to establish expectations*. Busy parents and children can easily use lack of time as a rationale for either adults doing the chore or leaving it undone.
- **Siblings.** Siblings can become really good at subverting parent expectations. "It's not fair" can become a mantra of older siblings when expectations for them increase with their growing competence. Try to set clear expectations that are appropriate and fair for each child. *Discussing the chore plan as a family* can give children an opportunity to *voice concerns and help set a plan* that works for all.



As with all aspects of good parenting, it is much easier to talk or write about turning children into responsible helpers than to *actually make it happen*, but the effort is worth it! **Here are some ideas - see what works for you:**

- **Give young children simple tasks.** Children as young as two can be given household chores, such as helping take clothes out of the dryer, putting their clothes away, cleaning up after a meal by throwing away the paper napkins or wiping tables or counters, carrying a backpack from the car into child care, or turning off lights at bedtime. Keep expectations realistic when children are very young or chores are new: the goal is establishing the routine and teaching kids responsibilities, rather than how clean the table is or how neatly folded their clothes are.
- **Choose age-appropriate chores.** Chores should be *based on developmental levels*: older children can do more, & more complex tasks. These chores can take a little longer, require more effort, like: setting/clearing off the dinner table, sorting/folding the laundry, washing dishes, sweeping the kitchen, or taking out the garbage.
- **Use chore calendars & reward systems.** Calendars and chore charts are not only good organizational systems, but can also be used for to help reinforce language and math skills for children.
- **Consider the timing of chores for kids.** Assign or schedule chores for a time that work best for your child. Right after school or immediately before bed when kids need some down time may not be the best times for chores.
- **Include all family members in carrying out chores.** Reduce conflict and resistance by making it clear to all family members that "everyone has to pitch in." It is also reasonable to assert that you work hard outside of the home as part of your own effort.
- **Recognize a job well done.** Find a good balance between praise and recognition of the effort children make to complete household chores. Chores are part of living and should be considered part of the family contribution rather than a task that calls for effusive praise. A simple "great work getting your chores done on time" recognizes your child's effort. Likewise, *monetary allowances for chores* as a means of sharing the family income for "all the work we do" can be a good way to recognize efforts and *orient them to financial literacy*.
- **Involve children in the decision-making process.** Listen and give clear choices about tasks. Ask, "What chores are you interested in doing? Would you prefer to clear the table or put the dishes in the dishwasher?" But remember: you are "your children's boss" and it is okay to assign household chores that they may not want to do.
- **Try to have fun.** Family chores can be *fun for children*. Laundry can involve games such as sorting, matching, and tossing socks in the basket. Listening to music can add some life to chores—a little song and dance can become a part of doing chores together. \*\*\*

## FOR LEADERS & TEACHERS

**Rethinking Homework:** *Best Practices That Support Diverse Needs*

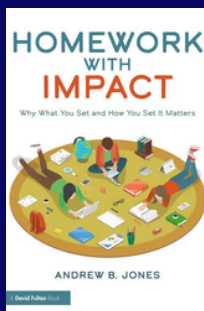
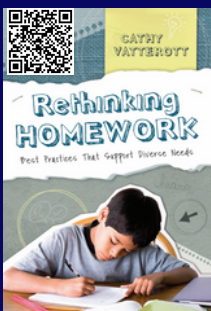
- by **Cathy Vatterott**

In this, Cathy Vatterott examines the role homework has played in the culture of schooling over the years; how such factors as family life, the media, and "homework gap" issues. She also explores how the current homework debate has been reshaped by forces including the Common Core, a pervasive media and technology presence, the mass hysteria of "achievement culture," and the increasing shift to standards-based and formative assessment.

The best way to address the homework controversy is not to eliminate homework. Instead, the author urges educators to replace the old paradigm with a new paradigm. Numerous examples from teachers and schools illustrate the new paradigm in action.



## FOR PARENTS & STUDENTS



## SPRING TIME BRINGS IN FRESH IDEAS!

When teachers use activities that make learning engaging and fun, students are more willing to participate and take risks. Having fun while learning also helps students retain information better because the process is enjoyable and memorable. Here are **some ways to engage children in some not-so-commonly-used ways**:

**Genius Hour/Passion Projects:** Allowing students to pursue their own interests through dedicated class time for passion projects or Genius Hour fosters autonomy, creativity, and intrinsic motivation. Students choose topics they are passionate about and engage in self-directed learning.

**Escape Rooms:** Creating classroom escape rooms based on academic content can make learning engaging and fun. Students work together to solve puzzles, find clues, and unlock mysteries related to the curriculum, promoting teamwork and problem-solving skills.

**Silent Discussions:** In silent discussions, students write responses or questions on sticky notes or a shared digital platform instead of speaking aloud. This allows for thoughtful reflection, reduces anxiety for shy students, and ensures everyone's voice is heard.

**Reflective Journaling:** Provide prompts for students to write reflective journal entries about their learning experiences, connections they've made, questions they still have, or insights they've gained. Encourage them to express themselves freely and critically analyze their thoughts.

**Philosophical Chairs:** Set up a structured discussion where students physically move to one side of the room to indicate their agreement or disagreement with a statement or proposition. They then defend their positions using evidence and reasoning.

**Storytelling Workshops:** Encourage students to create and share stories related to the lesson material. This could involve writing short narratives, performing skits, or even creating multimedia presentations. Emphasize creativity, originality, and thematic relevance.

**Gallery Walk with Questions:** Instead of just displaying student work, accompany each piece with thought-provoking questions related to the content. Encourage students to engage in dialogue about the questions as they move around the gallery.

**Socratic Circles:** Similar to Socratic Seminars, but in smaller groups. Students discuss a topic or text using open-ended questions. They are encouraged to explore multiple perspectives, challenge assumptions, and delve deeper into the material.

**Loop Game:** In a loop card game, you first deal the pupils a set of cards. Each card has a question and an answer to a different question on it. It is your student's job to keep the game moving by reading their question once they have answered. Eventually, the whole class will have read their answer and asked their question!

**What's The Good Word:** A great vocabulary builder! This is best played as a team game, each turn giving them a chance to guess the *keyword* with a list of related clues. Play begins with an introductory statement. For example, "This can either be a friend to man or an enemy." Clues are single word hints, spoken one at a time while the timer goes on. Clues for this e.g. could be: *WILD, RED, FLASH, GUN, ANTS, SIDE, TRUCK, HYDRANT*, and finally *FIGHTER* (a maximum of ten clues can be revealed). The good word in this case, is *FIRE*. Scoring reduces based on the clues attempted.

We hope these "magical" strategies help with student engagement! \*\*\*



NALANDA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Vadodara



TEACHER TRAINING

Team QEDRAK recently conducted "**Leading with a Difference**" for the Sectional Heads & Coordinators of Nalanda International School. The session explored skills, attitudes and mindset necessary for transformational leadership in today's tech-driven, dynamic educational landscape.

The session began with an open-house discussion and deeper understanding of the terms *Visionary, Leader, Manager* - and the roles they play in a school scenario across the 4 levels of NEP. The session also covered - fostering a Team Building Culture; being a Reflective Leader; innovative leadership mindsets & attitudes; as well as the importance of setting SMART goals for one's self and the team. The icing on the cake came at the end, with leadership-based case studies, in which the Nalanda leaders took to the stage to role-play various challenging situations and proposed solutions through their own perspectives.

An engaging day that exemplified that **Leaders too are Lifelong Learners.**

RIB TICKLERS

**Why did the boy eat his homework?**  
*Because his teacher said it was a piece of cake.*

**Why don't you do arithmetic homework in the jungle?**  
*Because if you add 4+4 you get ate.*

**What kind of ship makes you do chores?**  
*I don't know. What kind?.....A mothership!*

**What do you call that day when you finally do all the chores and work you've let pile up?** *Tomorrow.*

**Why don't fish need to do homework?**  
*Because they're always swimming in schools.*

The JUNE '24 theme - **Prepping for the Changing Face of Assessments**

Send your contributions - an effective classroom strategy / class humour / vocab word / a featured article / book titles / new trends, to : [team@qedrak.com](mailto:team@qedrak.com)



## ADIEU 2023-24 WELCOME 2024-25

As we bid farewell to 2023-24 and welcome the dawn of AY 2024-25, at QEDRAK, we pause to reflect on the remarkable journey we've shared with our cherished stakeholders — schools, teachers, leaders, parents, & students alike. The past year has been nothing short of extraordinary, filled with moments of learning, collaboration, transformation.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to each and every one - your unwavering support, active participation, and passion have been the driving force behind our success. Together, we have chartered NEP / NCF pathways, revamped practices to make them meaningful, relevant, and strengthened the foundations of the education community.

As we look ahead, we are filled with excitement and optimism. We are committed to expanding our range of customized educational services, forging deeper connections with our stakeholders, and reaching even greater heights of impact and innovation.

We look forward to having those who have walked our path and shared in our vision and mission, to continue doing so. We also extend a warm invitation to new allies and partners who share our passion for education and our commitment to excellence in education. Here's to another year of growth, learning, and success for greater impactful education for our kids.

Together, we can discover transformational *breakthroughs!*



## RESOURCES AND KNOWLEDGEWARE

Quintessential **ED**ucational Resources And Knowledgeware

 [info@qedrak.com](mailto:info@qedrak.com)

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