



ELL Tips 4 Teachers

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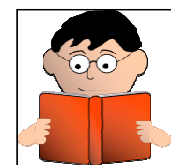
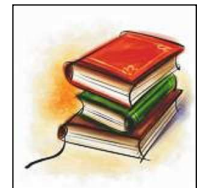
Uggghhh! Homework!

What a hot topic! Some teachers like to assign homework several times a week; some teachers use homework as a method of finishing work that is not completed during class time; and some teachers feel it should be outlawed because it either doesn't get done, it's all copied from another student, or the parents of our ELLs can't offer any help in completing it.



While it is true that many times the parents of our ELL students cannot offer help in the completion of homework due to language limitations, they still place an extremely high priority on homework. In most countries, homework is a daily requirement, and parents of our ELLs don't understand why we don't give more of it. Many of our ELLs have extra chores to do at home, like caring for younger siblings while parents work, but their parents still expect to see them doing something. Here are some ideas that may help:

- **Only assign what's necessary** to augment instruction. For instance, in math, if you can get sufficient information by assigning only five problems, then don't assign fifty.
- **Focus on practice and review.** Give students a chance to try new material, further practice skills they have recently learned, and review something they already know.



Remember, if you are sure they can't do it on their own, then they probably won't do it. Two things that your ELLs can do is read for 20 minutes each night, with parents signing a reading log stating that it actually has been done and writing in a journal. Their journal entries can be anything - what was the one thing that you most enjoyed in class today; what is something we discussed today that you still don't understand; explain the steps in how to.... Have the parents sign the journal log. Reading and writing activities will not only help our students with language proficiency, they can also be used as a form of assessment so that the teacher can see if there any gaps in understanding. Having parents sign the log helps them to understand what their child is doing in school and helps them to feel like active partners in their child's education.

- **Take students' age into consideration** when determining the amount of homework to assign. Recommendations from "Helping Your Students With Homework: A Guide for Teachers," published by the U.S. Department of Education, lists the following:

Grades 1-3: up to 20 minutes a night

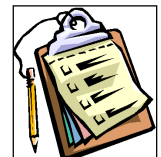
Grades 4-6: 20-40 minutes a night

Grades 7-9: up to 2 hours a night

Grades 10-12: 1½- 2½ hours per night

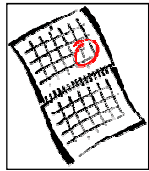
Remember, this is a cumulative amount. If you are only one of six teachers assigning homework, you should adjust accordingly. Additionally, our ELLs may need more time processing information. It is not unusual for them to require double the amount of time to complete assignments.

- **Share a list of homework rules** before handing out the



first assignment. A written explanation of expectations will increase the likelihood that assignments are completed. Let students know that homework is important, and that not doing an assignment will have consequences, which may include lower grades. Homework should be practice. Even if the students receive "help" from other students or parents, it is still important. It doesn't need to be corrected for a grade. You can give the students a completion checkmark in your grade book, followed up with a quick quiz at the beginning of class while you are taking roll, etc., to see if they actually understand the concept.

- **Let students know ahead of time** when homework will be assigned.



Some teachers always assign homework on specific nights—every Tuesday and Thursday, for example. This lets students *and parents* know when to expect homework. If parents know to look for homework on specific days, your chances of students actually completing the work and turning it in are greatly increased.

- **Employ a "While you were out" form** for students to fill out indicating any class periods they missed. (Leave blank copies of this form in a location accessible to students.) When students return these forms, fill out the form indicating the class work, homework, or tests that students missed, and return the forms to students. When students complete the make-up work, they should attach the form. Having a system for missed work will help you with organization, and it will reduce the number of last-minute assignments turned in at report-card time.



- **Give constructive feedback.** Students are more apt to complete assignments and advance their learning when they get consistent and constructive feedback. Make an effort to provide written comments on student work that lets them know what they did well and what they need to improve. Also, make sure the work is returned in a timely fashion. I've seen work turned in to teachers in early September that isn't returned to students until a few days before grade day. In my opinion, ancient feedback is useless feedback. The students will either have forgotten what the work was all about, or they will have continued to practice their mistakes until they become habits.



Did you know???

A 1929 survey conducted in an elementary school in New York City found that over 90% of parents were in favor of homework. A similar survey of parents in Pennsylvania in the early 1930s revealed that 78% felt that homework should be given to their children in grades 1-8.

In the post-Sputnik years of 1958 and 1959, some 51% of American adults felt that high school students weren't doing enough homework, and a nationwide poll in 2000 revealed that only 10% of parents felt that their children were getting too much homework. And despite the rise in the number of reports in the press around the turn of the 21st century about the overwhelming burden of homework, a national poll conducted in 2006 revealed that only 19% of parents thought that their children had too much homework.

The majority of parents still felt otherwise: 57% of those surveyed thought that their children were given the right amount of homework, while 23% thought that the amount was too little.

source: <http://www.funtrivia.com/playquiz/quiz3153222419438.html>