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## Vocabulary

There are 30 tricky vocabulary words throughout this issue in **bold**. Can you find them all? Go to Choices Online for activities to help you master these words.

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# Is Home Out of Control?

Some students (and even administrators) are calling for a time limit on outside assignments. Will this move reduce students' stress levels—or just make it harder to learn?

## 5 Fast Facts: Homework

**1**Historically, homework has been seen as a way to increase academic rigor and prepare students to succeed against our global competitors.

**2**One survey found that in the U.S., math teachers are the most likely to give out homework, followed by English or reading teachers.

**3**As homework loads increase, so does the amount of family stress, a recent study in *The American Journal of Family Therapy* found.

**4**Research shows that students who spend more time on homework may experience health issues like headaches, stomach pain, and sleep deprivation.

SOURCES: 1. *Review of Educational Research*, 2. The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher, 3. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 4. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 5. *The Journal of Educational Psychology*



# work

**IN  
THE NEWS!**

Los Altos and Mountain View high schools in California now have weekly time limits on assignments, as well as homework-free weekends.

**5** One hour of homework per day is the ideal amount, according to one study. The students who reported more than 90 to 100 minutes actually did worse on tests.

TURN THE  
PAGE TO  
TAKE A SIDE!



**YES**

**“Homework causes too much stress for today’s teens.”**

**THE DEBATER**



*Matt Nakamura, a high school junior from California*

**The amount of homework that** American students are given every night is ridiculous! Most teens already spend six hours in class each day, so when teachers assign several hours of homework, it limits our opportunity to learn from other activities and experiences.

Sports, clubs, hobbies, family responsibilities—these are all important parts of life that teach teamwork, socialization skills, and work-life balance. We should be allowed to enjoy them!

Unfortunately, teens today are under great pressure to participate in extracurriculars while also juggling lengthy, **excessive** assignments. The result? Everything suffers, and keeping up with the race to be well-rounded—and the stress that results—is

**detrimental** to our physical and mental health.

For example, when I’m assigned a big project during lacrosse season, I often have to stay up late to finish my work. The resulting stress and exhaustion then affect

my learning and performance the next day. It’s a vicious cycle. But that’s not all: I’ve actually given up joining other groups, like Italian Club, because I knew I wouldn’t have enough time to honor the commitment. It’s disappointing, because those clubs can help you meet new people and open you up to the wider world around you.

I do think homework is necessary, but even an hour a day is too much. Having a limit would relieve a great deal of stress for students, allowing us to fully focus on after-school activities that provide a different type of real-world education. Once we’ve returned home, we would be able to relax—then do our homework after we’ve recharged our batteries.

Tackling shorter assignments with a rested mind and fresh energy would surely lead to more learning, better grades, and lower stress levels. It’s a win for teachers, parents, and students alike.

## HOMework AROUND THE WORLD!

**How do *your* assignments compare with those of students in other countries?**

Researchers determined the average weekly amount of homework assigned to teens all over the globe and found that—while spending more time on homework *could* lead to higher standardized test scores—it doesn’t necessarily result in better overall grades. The takeaway? Homework is just one of *many* factors that influence school success. (Students in Finland, for example, spend only about 2.8 hours a week on homework—but still tend to excel on standardized tests.)

SOURCE: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development



DEBATE PHOTOS: COURTESY OF FAMILIES; SHUTTERSTOCK (ALL OTHER IMAGES)



**NO**

**“Juggling our assignments teaches us important life skills.”**

**THE DEBATER**



Lauren Hensley,  
a high school  
sophomore from  
Virginia

**No one is going to set limits on** the work we'll get when we're adults, so why do it now? Tackling homework every day teaches us time management and organizational skills, which are crucial components of the strong work ethic we'll need to succeed in college and the workforce. We might as well

learn how to handle everything now, rather than scramble to figure it out after we've graduated!

The truth is, the homework that teachers give us is not just busy work. It is meant to **supplement** and reinforce the lessons we've learned in class, **enriching** our learning and helping us **retain** what we've discussed. If homework were limited, we might not be able to cover all of the information we need to

know, and we probably wouldn't remember all of it either.

Homework also teaches us persistence. For example, I learn Spanish better when I'm first taught the words, then given a chance to write them out and recite

the vocabulary on my own. The same is true with other subjects, like math. If I don't get to practice by myself, I'm never sure I actually understand! Homework helps me—and many other students—figure out the answers and push toward solutions without relying on our teachers or classmates.

Teachers should have free range to teach their classes as they would like. If you truly have too much on your plate, talk about it with your teacher, who can help you **prioritize**.

Homework might not be fun to do, but learning to solve problems on our own—and to juggle our assignments—will benefit us all in the future.

**Which Side Are You On?**

Go to [Scholastic.com/choices](http://Scholastic.com/choices) to vote yes or no—and get real-time results that show how your opinion stacks up.



FINLAND  
2.8 hours



RUSSIA  
9.7 hours



SOUTH KOREA  
2.9 hours



CHINA (SHANGHAI)  
13.8 hours



ITALY  
8.7 hours



IRELAND  
7.3 hours

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