

Homework

An important aspect of secondary school education is the continued development of skills, habits and experiences which promote independent and effective learning. The conquering of homework is one such challenge, which St Arnaud Secondary College believes is in the best interests of its students. To ensure that homework is purposeful, productive and appropriately challenging, we have

- A Homework Policy
- Recommended times for homework for each Year Level
- 'Twelve Steps to Success With Homework', a guide for students to follow in order that they establish an effective routine for the completion of homework, and experience success.
- A regular study group program
- Suggestions about where to seek help with any difficulties which arise in students' attempts to establish an effective and productive approach to homework

School Homework Policy

The purpose of homework

We set homework in order to achieve a number of goals.

Our experience tells us that the amount of time students spend on learning particular material has a strong influence on the effectiveness of their learning. We also know that it is "engaged time of attentiveness to the task" that is important. One way to extend students' time on task is to set homework.

There are two key benefits in homework. One is the immediate benefit of more time being committed to work commenced in school. The other is that, by being done in a less supervised environment, homework encourages the development of self-discipline, organizational abilities and personal responsibility.

There are obvious reasons why the extent of homework should be increased as students move through the school but we also need to make sure that there are appropriate limits. In secondary schools, it is important that teachers communicate among themselves to ensure that the homework load is reasonable. Our school also recognizes that there is life outside school and that students must have time to pursue other activities.

Types of homework

- Completing classwork
- Work which reflects what is being done in class, such as questions or worksheets
- Research or planning for a project being done in class
- Assignment (done almost entirely out of class)
- Home study (revision or learning of work done in class)

Guidelines for homework time allocations

Homework is an important part of an effective study routine. The following hours are listed as a guide for parents and students.

Actual times will vary a little from week to week, according to many variables, such as effective use of class time, speed and efficiency in particular subjects, and whether students have paced themselves effectively to complete tasks which are set over a week or more. However, if students are routinely spending well in excess of the time recommended, parents may wish to speak to the college or to individual teachers

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12
Four and a half hours per week	Six and a half hours per week	Eight hours per week	Ten hours per week	Twelve to fifteen hours per week	Fifteen to twenty hours per week
About 45 minutes each week night	About 60 minutes each week night	About 90 minutes per week night	About 120 minutes per week night	About 120 minutes per week night	About 150 minutes per week night
At least 45 minutes per week for English and 45 minutes per week for Mathematics	At least 60 minutes per week for English and 60 minutes per week for Mathematics	At least 75 minutes per week for English and 75 minutes per week for Mathematics	At least 75 minutes per week for English and 75 minutes per week for Mathematics	Time should be spread across all learning areas	Time should be spread across all learning areas
Up to 30 minutes for each other learning area per week	Up to 30 minutes for each other learning area per week	Up to 45 minutes for each other learning area per week	Up to 45 minutes for each other learning area per week		

It is interesting to note that in a recent Victorian study where students were asked how much homework they thought they should do, students said the following: *on each weeknight*:

- Year 7 should do 45 minutes
- Year 8 do 60 minutes and
- Year 9 students an hour and fifteen minutes.

Half of the students felt that they should be expected to undertake homework at weekends.

The figures nominated by students across Victoria are remarkably similar to those nominated by St Arnaud Secondary College. We believe they are a fair, reasonable and appropriate length of time for students to be extending their classroom learning.

Setting homework: successful strategies subject teachers employ

- Writing all homework on the board, in the same format as students write it in their diaries e.g. English 26/4 Complete questions 3 and 4 on Wide Reading sheet
- Especially early in the year, checking that students have entered homework completely and correctly in their diaries
- Following up homework not done, with a note in the diary. Tell students that their parents must sign the note.
- Indicating the length of time students are expected to spend on the task or assignment
- When homework is not done, taking steps to ensure it is completed.

Holidays and homework

Students are very busy during term-time. This means that for students, holidays should present an opportunity for a break from many of the pressures of study. Teachers may recommend that students undertake some reading pertinent to their study in the following term or set some work for completion, but this will generally not be excessive.

Year 7 Term 1 – Special Arrangements

Because the beginning of secondary school represents a new chapter in students' lives, we recognize that students need time to make the transition into understanding and responding to our expectations and arrangements. Part of this relates to homework. During first term in Year 7, all teachers follow the following arrangements:

- No assignments are done entirely or substantially outside class: teachers will ensure sufficient class time so that students do not need to undertake hours of independent work outside class time
- Teachers check that their homework has been entered accurately by students in their diaries
- Teachers include an indication of the time they estimate students should spend on the set task.
- Parents are asked to monitor students doing their homework, and if necessary, write a note when a student has spent the allotted time on homework
- During first term, work submitted late will still be assessed, but accompanied by the comment that this will not be the case after the start of Term 2.

The Twelve Steps To Success With Homework - A Guide For Students

- 1. Use your diary in class to enter all work to be completed.**
(Your teacher will give you instructions.)
- 2. Write your name on everything.**
(Handouts, completed work, assignments etc.)
- 3. File all loose sheets in your folder in their subject sections.**
(Are there any papers in your bag? In your diary? Locker? Pockets?)
- 4. Check your diary regularly, ensuring that you have covered all work which has been set by your teachers.**
(Say, "What am I doing in this subject? What should I be doing about it at home? When is it due?")
- 5. Pack your schoolbag carefully.**
(At the end of the day ask yourself: *What work should I take home? What set work or assignments are due tomorrow?* In the morning, check – *Have I got everything I need today? Do I need to take sports uniform or equipment?*)
- 6. Decide which tasks are most urgent.**
(Are all the due dates in your diary?)
- 7. Complete set homework tasks.**
(Do them in order of priority.)
- 8. Work on long-term projects and assignments.**
(Start them as soon as you get them.)
- 9. Revise for tests and other assessments.**
(Everything you are taught will be assessed in some way.)
- 10. Read all your handouts.**
(If you are given a handout, you are expected to read it. Highlight or underline the main points.)
- 11. Edit your written work.**
(Does it say what you want it to say? Is it well expressed? What can you change to improve it?)
- 12. Make shopping lists of items needed.**
(Do you need more lined paper? Pens? etc.)

Put this list in your diary and keep a copy at home. Refer to it daily.

If you encounter difficulties, please seek assistance from your Year Level Coordinator or Study Group teacher. **Do NOT struggle in silence.**

Study Group

Many students, particularly in early secondary school, are only just beginning to manage a workload covering a range of subjects and topics. Study Group is an opportunity for students to do homework at school and assist them to develop independent work habits. Study Group is also used by teachers to discuss individual progress and to talk about important issues with students.

Study Group takes place fortnightly in groups of around 12 students from different year levels. A teacher supervises each session.

Who to contact when help is needed about homework	
Homework is too difficult?	Contact the subject teacher. If this is happening in more than one subject, speak to the Year Level Coordinator or Study Group teacher.
Disorganized? Unsure of how to go about homework?	Speak to the Year Level Coordinator or Study Group teacher, after first working with the Twelve Steps to Success With Homework: A Guide for Students
Too much homework?	If it is in one subject only, the first person to talk to is the subject teacher. If the issue is across all subjects, speak to the Year Level Coordinator
Weren't able to complete the task in the set time?	Write a note in the diary, signed by parents, explaining to the subject teacher that a problem has arisen which prevented the completion of the task by the due date. Family commitments or special circumstances do take priority at times, and as long as teachers know, then they can make allowances
Won't be able to complete the task by the due date?	The student should speak to the subject teacher, in advance, and outline reasons why an extension of time should be granted
When all else fails?	Contact the Assistant Principal or Principal