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4 Tips for Completing Your Homework On Time

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Homework, a necessary evil according to many teachers, has a lot of students tied up in knots. Some students can never seem to get things turned in on time. In fact, many students do not even realize that they *have* homework until a friend from class texts them or they overhear someone in the halls talking about Ms. So-and-so's terrible, no-good, awful, horrifying worksheet for Chemistry that is due the next day. These five tips for completing your homework on time, however, should help you get that homework finished on time.

Tip 1: Rely On a Planning System

Most of you by now are well acquainted with a homework planner. It has the dates, the school subjects you are taking, and a whole lot of blank space to write down your homework assignments. Use these planners if you have them. Writing with an actual pencil or pen may seem almost archaic what with technology virtually doing everything for us, but the kinesthetic movement of writing down an assignment into one of those little squares (Language Arts test tomorrow - STUDY TONIGHT), will actually help solidify that homework in your brain.

Plus, when you are packing up to go home at the end of the school day, all you have to do is open up that planner to see which books, folders, and binders need to go home with you so you will not miss out anything that you need to do that evening.

Some people *hate* using planners. They'd rather walk on a pile of crushed glass than actually write something down in a planner. That's quite all right. One student kept a wadded up piece of paper in his pocket where he'd scrawl his assignments. It worked for him, so it was fine. For those of you not keen on planners or crumpled up notes, your phone can come in really handy. Just download a productivity app and type your assignments in there. Or, keep track of all the work due in the notes section of your phone. Or, snap a picture of the homework board in each teacher's class before you head out into the hallway. Or, if you are really dead-set against

anything planner-related, then just send yourself a text after each class with your homework assignments for the night.

No matter which planning system you prefer, use it. Check off each item once you get it in your backpack. Your brain can only process so much information at a time, so you absolutely must write your homework down if you plan to complete it on time.

Tip 2: Prioritize Your Homework Assignments

All assignments are not created equal. It's strongly recommended you use a prioritizing system when you sit down at home with your homework. Try a system a little something like this:

A "1" assignment is of primary importance. Severe negative consequences will occur if this assignment is not completed tonight.

Examples: Studying for a major test coming up tomorrow. Finishing a major project due tomorrow. Writing an essay worth a LOT of points that is due tomorrow.

A "2" assignment is important. Some negative consequences will occur if this assignment is not completed tonight.

Examples: Studying for a quiz coming up tomorrow. Completing a homework sheet that is due tomorrow. Reading a chapter that is due tomorrow.

A "3" assignment needs to be finished by the end of the week.

Examples: Studying for a spelling test that will occur on Friday. Writing a blog and posting it on the class board by Friday. Finish a book upon which you will take a quiz on Friday.

A "4" assignment is ongoing and needs to be finished by test day or the end of the quarter.

Examples: Reviewing chapters for the midterm exam. Working on an ongoing project, research paper, or long assignment due at the end of the quarter. Completing a packet that isn't due for two weeks.

Once you've prioritized the work you have to do, complete all the 1's first, then the 2's, moving down as you go. That way, if you find yourself pressed for time because Great-Grandma decided to stop over for family dinner and your mom insisted you spend the evening playing bridge with

her despite the fact that you have hours of homework ahead of you, then you will not have missed anything vitally important to your grade.

Tip 3: Get the Worst Assignment Over With First

So, maybe you absolutely hate writing essays (But, why, though when all you have to do is follow these essay tips?) and you have a major essay staring you in the face that *must* be completed before tomorrow. You also have to study for a major math test, complete a social studies blog by Friday, study for the ACT next month, and finish up your science worksheet from class. Your "1" assignments would be the essay and the math test. Your "2" assignment is the science worksheet, the "3" assignment is that blog, and the "4" assignment is studying for the ACT.

Ordinarily, you would start with the science worksheet because you *love* science, but that would be a big mistake. Start with those "1" assignments and knock out that essay first. Why? Because you hate it. And completing the worst assignment first gets it off your mind, out of your homework cache, and makes everything that comes after it appears to be really, really easy. It will be an absolute *joy* to complete that science worksheet once you have written the essay. Why rob yourself of joy?

Then, once you've completed the stuff due first, you can focus on putting in a little bit of time on the ACT. Easy peasy.

Tip 4: Take Planned Breaks

Some people believe that sitting down to complete homework means that you literally park your behind in a chair and you don't move it for the next four thousand hours or so. That is one of the worst study ideas in history. Your brain only has the capacity to stay focused for about 45 minutes (maybe even less for some of you) before it goes on the fritz and starts wanting to make you get up and dance the Roger Rabbit. So, schedule your study time with breaks actually built in. Work for 45 minutes, then take a 10-minute break to do whatever it is people your age like to do. Then, rinse and repeat. It looks a little something like this:

Homework Time:

45 minutes: Work on "1" assignments, starting with the absolute worst.

10 minutes: Get a snack, play Pokemon Go!, surf Instagram

45 minutes: Work on "1" assignments again. You know you didn't finish.

10 minutes: Do some jumping jacks, dance the Macarena, polish your nails.

45 minutes: Work on "2" assignments and maybe even finish with any 3s and 4s. *Put everything in your backpack.*

Completing your homework on time is a learned skill. It requires some discipline and not everyone is naturally disciplined. So, you have to practice checking that you have everything you need for homework when you are still at school, prioritizing your work, plunging into the assignments you loathe, and taking planned breaks. Isn't your grade worth it?

You bet it is.