

**Weekly Read week 5A: this is an article from the BBC News website about a recent Tweet in which comedian and actor Rob Delaney said seven-year-olds are set too much homework. You can read the full article, including all the Tweets, here:**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-45645849>

## **Is homework pointless? Comedian says kids' workload is 'madness'**

25 September 2018

Are children getting too much homework in the UK? Comedian and actor Rob Delaney thinks so.

"Why do they give seven-year-olds so much homework in the UK and how do I stop this?" he wrote on Twitter.

His comments sparked a social media debate and other celebrities were soon weighing in with their thoughts.

Many agreed with the star of the Channel 4 sitcom *Catastrophe*, who lives in London with his wife and two sons.

He said: "I want my kid frolicking and drawing and playing football. Who knows more about stopping this madness and can help me?"

The American also suggested parents who called for more homework weren't fond of their offspring.

Match of the Day presenter Gary Lineker, a father of four, agreed with Delaney, calling homework a "waste of time".

He said it brought stress to the home, child, parents and their relationship.

Delaney also received support from fellow comedians, and fathers, Romesh Ranganathan and Jason Manford.

Manford pointed out that it was often the parents who ended up doing it, saying he spent three hours on a Sunday cutting things out of magazines and researching animal teeth.

And it wasn't just celebrities who joined in the debate.

One Twitter user, Alison Waller, said she refused to spend weekends doing homework with her eight-year-old.

She added: "Playing in the park yes, baking yes, chatting yes etc. Learning comes in many forms."

Another, Chris Walsh, said his child's primary school had put an end to homework after parents intervened.

However, there were some dissenting voices - led by Good Morning Britain presenter Piers Morgan, who said lazy parents would agree with Lineker.

He added: "Most parents understand that homework, if well organised, plays an important part in their children's education."

In response, Julian Thomas, head of independent school Wellington College, said the real discussion should be about the quality of homework.

He tweeted: "The reason homework causes such stress is because too much of it is mind-numbing and of little educational value."

So where does the government stand?

In 1998 the government introduced guidelines in England and Wales recommending an hour a week for five to seven-year-olds, rising to half an hour a night for seven to 11-year-olds. The year before this advice was brought in just over six in every 10 primary schools made their pupils do homework, according to the Institute of Education.

A year after the guidelines came in, this had risen to around nine in 10 primary schools and the majority still set homework now.

Labour's advice was scrapped in England in 2012 and schools now have more flexibility to design systems to suit their own students.

Schools also have the power to decide in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

So if Delaney is serious about wanting to reduce his child's workload, his school's head teacher should expect a knock on the door.

- Label the following statements **true or false**:
  - Both the headline and subheadline contain a rhetorical question
  - Rob Delaney stars in a Channel 4 sitcom
  - Gary Linekar believes that some parents are lazy
  - Homework for primary school children in England is compulsory
- Find **two metaphors** in the second paragraph (beginning *His comments...*) and explain why the writer has made these language choices.
- What is a **similarity** between the opinions of presenter Piers Morgan and headteacher Julian Thomas?
- What piece of **advice** does the writer of the article give Rob Delaney if he wishes to make a difference to the amount of homework his child receives?
- What does '**dissenting**' mean?