

HOMework AT BENNETT

Challenging homework, appropriate for age and stage of students, consolidates learning, deepens understanding and prepares students very well for work to come.

Evaluations of the research about the impact of homework show that for secondary age students it adds about 5 months of progress when implemented effectively

Bennett's three homework principles

1. Homework should either **embed, improve or apply**. It should not require learning without the input of a teacher before or after.
2. Homework should be specific and work on the mastery of a particular skill or section of content.
3. Feedback, and the application of that feedback, should always inform what homework is set.

Embed

To consolidate learning that has taken place in the classroom, eg revision for assessment or learning key knowledge. We know that we need to think hard about information 4 or 5 times, if we are going to embed it into our memory. Homework that embeds knowledge might be:

- Memorising key quotes and words
- Memorising factual information
- Memorising vocabulary/spellings

Essentially embedding is about building up memory so that information is stored in our long-term memory, thus freeing up the working memory for learning new information. This kind of homework provides the building blocks for more complex tasks which require students to combine and apply such knowledge. To memorise anything, we need to think hard about it.

Outcomes of this kind of homework might involve tests in class, quizzes, whiteboard question and answer sessions. It need not necessarily involve work that has to be formally assessed although it might do if set as part of a structured revision programme for formal exams.

Improve

To refine and develop knowledge learned in the classroom based on feedback from the teacher. This could include:

- Improving pieces of work to a higher standard
- Making corrections to work in order to eradicate errors
- Revising previous assessment material in order to re-take tests and exams

Essentially improving could be going over previously learned work to ensure it is really secure with a view to having it assessed again, or it could be to move understanding beyond what has been achieved in the classroom to add breadth and/or depth to previous knowledge.

Whatever it is, it needs to be clearly directed so that students are not struggling to manage something too difficult at this stage; neither should they be repeating work that they have already secure knowledge of. In all cases it should be appropriately gauged to the needs of the students.

Apply

Applying involves using learning from the classroom to complete a specific task. Suitable tasks might be:

- Completing a question which requires students to synthesise their understanding
- Applying a technique such as adding tone to a self-portrait in art
- In languages, translating pieces of writing applying knowledge taught in class

Applying might be considered the 'heavyweight' homework technique, in that it requires specific feedback from the teacher in order to ensure that students know how the outcome has been evaluated and marked. When setting homework of this nature it can be useful to 'feedforward' before students attempt the work in order to avoid common misconceptions.

Setting homework – additional guidelines for staff

1. Homework should be set according to the timetable published for each year group. Homework should be set on MS Teams, with clear instructions and any resources needed.
2. Homework must be set according to the principles set out in detail above.
3. Homework should be manageable, both in terms of the time allocated to it and the logistics of actually completing it by the deadline. Work arising from group activities can be difficult for students to complete outside of class and should therefore be avoided – homework needs to be able to be completed unaided at home and students need to know what their own contribution should be.
4. Homework should not normally be set for completion by the next day as this can put undue pressure on students and can be used as an excuse not to complete it. Deadlines should also consider holiday periods when students might be taken away by their parents.
5. It should be noted in the homework diary even when homework is set on MS Teams, and it is teachers' responsibility to ensure that this happens.
6. If you share a class with other teachers, make sure you know who is setting the homework.
7. Homework should never be set as a sanction. You may suggest to students that they will need to finish at home if they have worked slowly in class but this should be in addition to the homework which is set. You should always check that any such catch-up work has been completed in the next lesson.
8. Non-completion of homework must be followed through in accordance with subject and school policy. The use of iPoints to register missing homework provides a record and a channel of communication with parents, and also triggers appropriate sanctions through the year manager's and tutor's monitoring of iPoints, but teachers must themselves ensure that missing homework is completed.
9. Where homework is set to consolidate and secure knowledge, there should be a test or assessment to check it has been done. Otherwise there will be a lower rate of completion next time.

Year 7 - 30 mins per homework		Year 8 - 30 mins per homework		Year 9 - 40 mins per homework		Year 10 & 11 - 45 mins per homework	
Subject	Times per fortnight	Subject	Times per fortnight	Subject	Times per fortnight	Subject	Times per fortnight
Science	3	Science	3	Science	4	English	4
Languages	2	Languages	2	Languages	4	Maths	4
English	4	English	4	English	4	RE	3
Maths	4	Maths	4	RE	2	Option A	3
Latin	2	Latin	2	Option A	2	Option B	3
Computing	2	Computing	2	Option B	2	Option C	3
Art	2	Art	2	Option C	2	Option D	3
Music	2	Music	2	Option D	2	Option E	3
Technology	2	Technology	2	Option E	2	Option F	3
Philosophy	1	Philosophy	1				
RE	1	RE	1				
Geography	2	Geography	2				
History	2	History	2				

10. There is no prescribed limit or fixed schedule for students in Years 12-13, although 4-5 hours work at home per week for each A level subject is a guideline.