

# YES

Would it surprise you to learn that some middle school students spend

more time in class and doing homework than many adults put in at their 40-hour-a-week jobs? That's right, the daily grind of homework pushes many kids to put in as much time as overworked adults.

Yet research shows that all that extra time spent doing homework isn't even helping students academically—and it's hurting their health. One recent study concluded

that middle schoolers who were assigned 90 to 100 minutes of homework per day did *worse* on math and science tests than students who did just 60 minutes' worth. Another study found that having to complete too many after-school assignments can leave kids stressed out and sleep-deprived—two factors we *know* hinder learning.

Homework also takes time away from other important things that contribute to a well-rounded childhood: family dinners, hanging out with friends, playing outdoors, and plain old rest.

That's why we should challenge our schools to let kids do practice exercises and projects during the school day, not after the bell rings. An all-out ban on homework would be best so students *and* teachers would have more time for other meaningful activities. If teachers must assign homework, such tasks should be the exception, not the rule. Further, students should have the right to opt out of an assignment if they need to make time for something more important or to prioritize their health.

In the end, students deserve to clock out after their school day so they can relax, get to bed on time, and stay healthy.

—VICKI ABELES

**Author of *Beyond Measure: Rescuing an Over-scheduled, Overtested, Underestimated Generation* and director of the documentary *Race to Nowhere***

**Too much homework leaves kids stressed out and sleep-deprived.**

# NO

A few schools have recently cut out homework. But having students do some assignments

each school night is important.

I've been studying the effects of homework for many years. Research shows that kids who do an appropriate amount of homework each night perform better in class than those who don't. Think about your experiences with homework. Don't you get higher scores on vocabulary and math tests when you practice at home beforehand? These positive effects become even more beneficial as you get older.

Doing homework also teaches you how to manage your time and the importance of finishing what you start. It helps you learn how to work independently, solve problems, and find answers on your own. That sets you up to be a lifelong learner. And even more important, homework teaches you that learning doesn't happen just in the classroom.

In addition, doing homework builds study habits. To stay on top of all of your assignments, you have to be organized and disciplined. These skills will be even more critical when you're in high school and college. Homework is also a good way for your parents and teachers to track your progress, and decide when to step in if you need help.

But too much homework can definitely be a bad thing. It can get in the way of

activities you enjoy, including sports, after-school activities, volunteer work, or just relaxing. That's why experts recommend that middle school teachers assign no more than 60 to 90 minutes of homework per school night.

For many students, homework is rarely fun (though some projects can be). But it pays off in the long run. You'll look back and be glad you did it!

**Homework improves kids' study habits and helps them do better in school.**

—HARRIS COOPER

**Professor of psychology and neuroscience, Duke University, and author of *The Battle Over Homework***

**CORE QUESTION** What evidence does each writer use to support his or her claims? How does each writer address the other side's arguments? Who do you think makes the stronger case? Explain.