

20 *teaching ideas for homework*

1

Blog. Start a class blog to discuss and expand on the work covered in class, with a different member of the class submitting an entry each week. Works well as a 'learning journal' or revision tool if students are given clear guidance on the type of work expected.

2

Literacy skills. Homework can be useful for developing key literacy skills. Ask students to make spelling corrections, rewrite sections of an essay to add clarity, add punctuation to a piece or, for students who have these bases covered, add interest by diversifying their connectives.

3

Students set homework. Ask the class for their homework ideas. To ensure the ideas are relevant, give them what you want them to achieve (learning goals or outcomes etc.) as a result of the homework.

4

Collecting homework made easy! For each class, have a folder with the class list in. When homework is due in, simply pass the folder round, and students either tick or put an L for homework that is late. This not only makes it easier for you, but also puts the onus back on students to get more organised!

5

Assessment criteria stickers. Set out the assessment criteria for a piece of homework on handy stickers (such as address labels) which should be stuck at the top of the homework. This helps students keep focus throughout the piece of work and makes self/peer assessment really easy next lesson.

6

Use a homework menu. Build choice and ownership into homework tasks by allowing students to choose a selection of tasks from a menu. Ensure students challenge themselves by grouping tasks into difficulty and insisting that they pick at least one task from each group. Search '23775' to see an example on *Teachit History*.

7

Speaking and listening. Try asking students to write a speech, poem or presentation on the previous lesson's topic. You can then start the following lesson with students assessing each other's homework in groups.

8

Letter writing/email writing. Writing a letter or email to a famous person is always a popular task. Students could try to convince their MP of the need to commemorate a particular local or national event.

9

Class newspaper/ newsletter. Collect together the 'best bits' from students' work (or get students to nominate their own choices) over the course of a term, and give to students to take home to read with their parents. Works amazingly well as an incentive for GCSE and A level students, and is pretty simple to do.

10

Group homework. Get students to work in groups to complete their homework, with each student in the group taking on a responsibility for a particular task or section of the work. Make sure that you appoint a team leader who will be responsible for ensuring that the group get the work handed in on time.

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Research projects. These are an excellent way to give students a more open or independent way to work. There are a number of resources on *Teachit History* which might help to set this up (search: '20747', '19518' and '18278').

12

Peer assessing homework. Give students some success criteria and get them to mark each other's homework. For a quick review, ask the students to identify 'Two stars and a wish' i.e. two successful aspects of the work, and a target for improvement.

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Extended homework tasks. Set an extended homework at the start of the topic; this could last for three to four weeks and will allow students to develop their own organisation and independent learning.

14

Is your homework valid? Make sure that you use the homework you set in your lessons, so that students can see the benefit of it. Ask questions relating the homework, and interrogate how helpful they found doing it too. If students get used to homework feedback being used in lessons, they may be more likely to complete it (and to a higher standard)!

15

Personal targets. Get students to write their own homework goals as part of a plenary. What do they want to achieve in their homework? Based on the comments from previous pieces of homework, what do they need to do in order to improve their grades in this piece? Get them to write their own personal targets at the top of the page before they start their homework.

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Individual homework. As a plenary activity, ask students to write a list of their problem areas in the module you are studying. Based on this personal list, get them to devise and set themselves their own homework. You often get far more out of them than normal, as they can see the personal relevance of the task.

17

Wicked Wiki. Start a wiki as a class on a particular topic to pool knowledge. Make it a condition of the homework that every member of the class has to contribute. The project can be extended to last the length of the course, and students particularly enjoy it if you occasionally enter funny erroneous details which they have to correct.

18

Electronic essays. Collect essays via email or cloud-sharing. Marking becomes quicker as common comments can be cut and pasted, and students value the novelty of receiving emails back from teachers. It is also helpful, as you can use sections from the essays in subsequent lessons as 'model answers' for students to analyse.

19

Guided homework. For lower ability pupils, try using more guidance when setting homework. You could provide a written task sheet or a template/model of an activity so that they have more chance of achieving the objectives.

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Alternative homework! Be creative in your homework giving. Where possible, make sure you don't always set worksheets or writing tasks. Consider ideas such as creating a video, radio script or documentary.
