

## Metuchen Public Schools: Homework Guidelines

Homework is recognized as an appropriate and valid academic activity when it is assigned within appropriate pedagogical guidelines that recognize the needs of the whole child. Homework is considered any assignment that is to be completed by students outside of the normal class schedule.

1. Homework should be structured to advance the academic objectives of a course.
2. It is recognized that students at all academic levels are capable and deserving of meaningful homework assignments that advance academic objectives.
3. Teachers are encouraged to create homework assignments that are interesting, challenging and meaningful for students. Teachers are encouraged to vary homework assignments to meet specific pedagogical needs, enhance student engagement, and address content and skills inherent in the NJ Student Learning Standards.
4. The learning objective and purpose of the assignment should be made apparent to the student at the time of assignment. Valid objectives may include the following, or others: practice and reinforcement of skills, review of concepts and content, “trying out” skills, formative assessment, summative assessment, extending learning time, advance preparation for learning, research, reading and writing, reflection, critical thinking and application of learning, development of learning appreciation, and extension of learning to current and authentic topics related to the course.
5. Most homework should relate to current instruction within a course. Some extension assignments that relate to broader course objectives (such as current events or career research) may be given, but the course connection should be made clear to students.
6. Assignment expectations should be made clear to students, including appropriate instructions and any necessary information relating to academic integrity. Assignments should be able to be independently completed by the student. Information on expectations regarding collaboration with peers or parents, or use of resources, should be made clear at the time of assignment.
7. Meaningful feedback on assigned work should be provided for students whenever possible. Feedback is information provided to the student intended to help them improve performance, and is distinct from providing a grade. Feedback can take a variety of forms including teacher comments/corrections, rubric completion, peer to peer review, guided student reflection/

assessment, provision of answer keys with opportunities for questions, class discussion, re-teaching, etc... It is recognized that research suggests that feedback enhances the effectiveness of homework significantly. However, homework should not necessarily be avoided when feedback is not possible, as it still offers the potential to enhance student performance.

8. Grading of homework should be appropriate to the objective and purpose of the assignment. Summative assessments such as essays, lab reports, research papers, etc... are appropriately graded based on development or mastery of standards based criteria. Assignments intended as formative assessments, student reflection, advance preparation for learning, skill trial and practice, etc... may be graded using other criteria. The grading criteria should be made clear to students at the time of assignment.
9. Homework graded as non-summative assessments should comprise a small portion of a student's overall grade. The percentage or percentage range for such homework shall be developed within each department and approved by the department Supervisor. Attention should be paid to providing equity across multiple sections of the same course, and across different course levels within the same grade.
10. Homework should not require purchases beyond ordinary school supplies. Homework "credit" should not be awarded for non-academic tasks such as getting forms signed, bringing in supplies, etc...
11. In recognition of the needs of the whole child, homework assignments should be limited to a quantity of time appropriate to the students' age level. While teachers have discretion, research suggests ten minutes (15 minutes for reading) per grade level is considered a reasonable homework maximum. For example, an eighth grade student should reasonably be assigned no more than 80 minutes of homework per night, including assignments from all subjects and expected study time in preparation for assessments. In grades 6-12, the schedule suggests teachers should consider this guideline to be 10 minutes (15 for reading) per grade per week in total for an individual course.
12. It is recognized that students in AP courses may be assigned more homework. However, teachers should recognize that homework beyond approximately 2.5-3 hours per night at the upper high school levels has been shown to reduce student performance.
13. Teachers may consider measures to help students manage time, and "even out" homework loads. Such measures may include assigning homework over several nights or weekly, providing flexible due dates when possible, consulting with students, etc...

14. Homework extensions should be provided to accommodate religious holidays, whether or not school is in session.
  
15. Homework should be avoided during Thanksgiving weekend and the winter and spring breaks. Homework assignments may span the winter and spring breaks within the following guidelines: the assignment should be provided at least 6 school days before the break, the assignment should be due at least 6 school days after the end of the break, and the work should be able to be reasonably accomplished by the student during the periods before and after the break.