



Help kids with their homework... we have the answers

Want your kids to do their homework smarter, neater, faster? These tricks work, say parents and kids

- **Tess Elliott**, mum to Joe, 12, and Beth, 8, says: 'We've learnt that it's best to encourage the kids to do their homework on the day they get it. That way it's not looming over them all week. Hopefully, we're starting a good habit for life.'
- 'Don't focus on marks out of ten, and grades,' says **Sara Cleaver**, teacher and mum to Adam, 12, and Tom, 16. 'When you praise your kids, focus on their effort... how hard you've worked to. They need to see that hard work pays off and is rewarded in the end.'
- 'We do a whole-house switch off... kids need to see you the TV, phone and MSN going off, and staying off til homework's done,' says **Rajan Popat**, dad to Heena, 8.
- 'I follow homework with a boogie break. We do homework for 20 minutes. And let of steam dancing for 10,' says **Loula Annesley**, 9.
- 'My son hates to be left alone working... he loves a sociable atmosphere,' says **Ros Young**, mum to Callum, 12. 'I sit with him after dinner while he does his maths. I put the dishwasher on, and we settle down. I do my own calculations. And afterwards we compare answers. It brushes up my maths skills and gives us time together. I've surprised myself by looking forward to maths!'

Where to go for more homework inspiration...

- **www.skylearning.co.uk** helps GCSE and A Level students search for programmes on Sky that are relevant to their study subjects.
- **www.bbc.co.uk** Click on Bitesize for masses of help with homework. Plus a game which will teach your kids the basics of touch typing.
- Get homework help at **www.homeworkelephant.co.uk**.
- Encourage your child's class teacher to arrange a homework help session. They will be able to introduce you to maths methods and literacy targets. They've all changed since you were at school.

Create the right conditions

- **Right desk!** Create a homework area where they can work undisturbed, with a box or shelf for stationary and a dictionary. The Oxford Junior Illustrated Dictionary (£8.99, Oxford University Press) is a good starter reference. Make the area as cheerful and welcoming as possible, with a comfortable seat, good light and lots of space to spread out. Add a magnetic board for inspiring pictures, school notices and homework sheets.
- **Right timing!** Find a quiet time when they work best - the more regular the better.
- **Right snacks!** Kids' minds are often not on the job straight after they come home from school. Build in chill-out time, fruit and a yoghurt smoothie or a cereal bar before they get

down to business.

And finally... Encourage kids to save and backup their stuff if they're working on computer. Chat about the pitfalls of copying directly from the internet. It's a big no-no...
Get them to talk to their teachers if they are having problems understanding their work.