

Homework About Homework

By: Bob Schaffer, LCHS Headmaster

It's a unanimous response. Ask any Liberty student whether they have too much homework and the answer is "yes."

Put the same question to LCHS graduates, and you'll get a deeper, more reflective reply. Following are a couple examples.

From Johns Hopkins University, **Anna Garcia** (LCHS '14) wrote, "For me, the main difference between homework in high school and homework in college is that rather than having small problem sets due daily (in high school), there are 30-40 question problem sets due weekly (in classes such as math and science). It really is a kind of forced studying and the best teachers focus their homework problems to helping you prepare for the content in tests. In math this means problems, in history this means explanation and prompts that test one's understanding.

"As far as amount goes I think it is comparable to what I am doing in college just separated differently as in all of my homework is due now on Thursday or Friday."

Here's from **Christiana Spicer** (LCHS '13/Legio XIII) at University of Nebraska. "The homework load at Liberty, for me, was incredibly beneficial. While not all of the assignments were judicious, the vast majority were. The main homework at Liberty is from the math and English departments. These are the two subjects that I scored highest on for my ACT, and I believe that it has to do with the fact that I

understood them better due to the assignments that **Mr. Lovely** and **Mr. Dybziński** assigned to me throughout junior high and high school. I was taught a lot in the classroom, but doing math problems outside of class, and reading books and writing papers about them, are the things that taught me more than any classroom setting could have.



"Beyond that, having homework in high school taught me time management that has benefitted me throughout college. On top of all of my extracurricular activities (at Liberty), I had to find time to finish my homework at night, which meant that I was using every spare minute that I could. I carried this into college and find it easy to finish my assignments on time because of my time management.

"Some nights, the homework load at Liberty was too much, but other nights we wouldn't have any. It all depended. As long as students are diligent with their time, the homework is manageable, and in my opinion, incredibly beneficial not only for high school but also for college and beyond."

These two comments reflect, almost verbatim, the school's guiding philosophy on homework and reading as stated in the LCHS Student/Parent Handbook and the LCS Policy Manual.



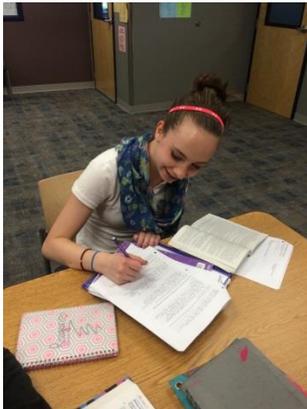
Homework is a fundamental part of our general academic program. It prepares primary students for high school and secondary students for college, and for entry into the working world upon graduation. It also helps develop a strong work ethic and personal organizational skills.

At the elementary school, figure on ten minutes of homework per night per grade (this is not a rule, only a guideline). In other words, if your student is in the third grade, thirty minutes of homework per night on average should be about right. This is in addition to their required-reading expectations.

Once in the ninth grade, the homework load climbs – steadily – and varies according to the difficulty of one’s elective-course choices. We’re wary of busywork and insist homework assignments be strictly limited to meaningful exercises that prepare students for essential classroom success.

The immediate educational purposes of a prudent homework load are 1) To reinforce skills and concepts learned in class, 2) to develop study skills and habits, 3) to practice skills and knowledge in ways that are not readily accomplished in the classroom; and, 4) to inform parents of what is being taught in the classroom.

Homework assignments should be expected Monday through Thursday of each week and on some weekends. In addition to regular homework assignments, we expect each child to read, or (in the younger grades) be read to at least three times a week and preferably every day.

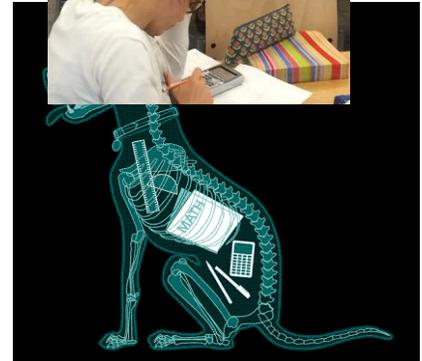


The amount of reading homework varies for each grade. Teachers will inform students what is expected for their grade level. As cited in *A Nation at Risk*, “the single most important factor for determining whether children will go to college is being read to as a child.”

Indeed, our students take on a challenging, rigorous curriculum. This is one of the many things that make Liberty a great school. With such a rich and rigorous curriculum, the students need time to work at home. We are aware that the student is involved with other interests and activities outside of school.

The staff and administration attempt to coordinate schedules and calendars so the students are not inundated with work on the same day. It is understood that homework will be given and will vary depending on the work assigned on a given day, the students’ organizational skills and study habits, and the nature of the assignments.

Students are expected to learn how to use their free time effectively to complete the required work at each grade level. Parents are expected to support their children in this endeavor. Advanced classes entail additional homework time.



At the high school, each academic department has its own homework policy. Students are expected to know the policy for each of their classes. Students are expected to show responsibility in preparation for tests and perseverance in completing quality assignments.

To get a better understanding of homework expectations and goals at Liberty, please read through the school's homework and reading policies.

It is helpful for all students, and sometimes parents, to remember that the hard way through high school is the easy way through college.