

**Homework at Mercer Island High School: Best Practices**  
**Established November 19, 2008**

**Philosophy:** Homework has the potential to enhance the learning process and improve student achievement. Students need to balance many competing interests and therefore, the intent of this document to help students achieve a healthy balance in their lives through effective homework assignment.

**Definition of Homework:** Any school related work that must be completed outside of instructional time including but not limited to: test preparation (study time), essays, projects, lab reports, worksheets and reading.

Homework can be grouped into three basic categories:

- **Preparation** is intended to ensure the student has enough background information to be prepared for subsequent learning activities.
- **Practice** is designed to provide students an opportunity to reinforce newly acquired skills, apply new or previously acquired learning, or complete required class work.
- **Extension** assignments are intended to encourage individualized and creative application of knowledge through research or independent study.

**MHS teachers will consider the following best practices in their instructional planning.**

**Homework should:**

- Be meaningful and related to course curriculum standards.
- Have clear instructions and clear learning outcomes
- Have a clearly defined purpose that serves to “prepare”, “practice” and/or “extend”.
- Take into consideration the individual learning needs of students.
- Take into consideration accommodations required by IEPs and 504 plans.
- Be of reasonable volume. It is understood that advanced level (Honors, AP, Dual Credit) courses will typically require more homework.
- Provide students with a reasonable time for completion.
- Provide a level of complexity appropriate to the course that does not require additional instruction from parents, guardians or others.
- Never be assigned as a punishment.
- Not require materials or resources not commonly found in most homes or additional costs.
- Be limited during school breaks and weekends.

Teachers should provide students with meaningful feedback on a timely basis, therefore, when homework is graded, it should be evaluated on the basis of the student’s achievement of course curriculum standards and/or the learning outcomes of the assignment. Teachers are encouraged to consider the use of available technology (teacher websites, Smartboards, email etc.) to enhance homework effectiveness. Teachers are also encouraged to provide students with some choice in designing their

own assignments and the opportunity to provide periodic feedback to their teachers on homework practices.

\*Note: This document will be included in the *MIHS Staff Handbook*

**Homework at Mercer Island High School: Guidelines for Students and Parents**  
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**MIHS Students should ensure that they:**

- Complete assignments to the best of their ability and turn them in on time.
- Take advantage of school services such as the MIHS tutoring program.
- Maintain academic integrity by using original sources and not relying on the work of others.
- Work on developing good time management skills.
- Be cognizant of the workload expected when choosing courses.
- Take extra-curricular activities into consideration when choosing courses.
- Contact teachers directly when they have concerns or questions with homework assignments.
- Understand that homework designed as “preparation” and “practice” increases learning and they may have difficulty in achieving standards and/or achieving a grade that reflects their ability without completion of homework assignments.

**How Parents/Guardians can support their children:**

- Support the efforts of their student and show interest in their homework.
- Provide time and a suitable environment for completing homework.
- Contact teachers directly with any concerns that may exist with homework, ideally after the student has discussed the matter with the teacher.
- Encourage completion of homework assignments.

Note: This document will be included in the *MIHS Student Handbook*