

# Do you know why teachers assign students homework?

In general, studying has lots of useful benefits. But when teachers give a specific assignment, it's usually for one of four reasons. Understanding these goals helps parents and kids find study time more rewarding. They are:

1. Preparation. Some assignments get your child ready for upcoming topics. If the teacher plans a lesson about the Civil War for instance, your child may be asked to read a chapter in her social studies textbook beforehand. Preparation homework typically requires reading or research.
2. Practice. Doing the same kind of work repeatedly--writing spelling words, solving practice problems or reciting multiplication tables--helps your child reinforce skills. This may seem tedious, but it's necessary.
3. Demonstration. It's challenging for kids to use different skills to show what they've learned. Projects such as preparing an oral report, building a model, writing a paper or putting on a play encourage creativity and let students demonstrate their understanding of concepts.
4. Extension. This involves applying knowledge to a new situation. For example, your child might be asked to compare and contrast two historic events, do a science experiment or solve a real-life problem.

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