

A-Z of teaching young learners: Homework

What and why?

Homework serves many useful purposes in learning, although few children would agree! It helps to keep the children in contact with what they are learning, especially when their lessons are only once or twice a week. It can also give an opportunity for the individual child to focus on his or her personal work, outside the classroom. Language learning is a slow process, so some work outside the classroom is always useful.

Practical ideas

- It is important to remember that a young child's life is often very full. They usually return home from school very tired, and the last thing they want to do is more school work. Small amounts of homework are best, then, perhaps taking about 20 minutes. More than that can have a negative result in creating a dislike of learning English.
- The Activity Book provides many exercises that the children can do alone. Before you ask them to do an exercise at home, however, it is important that you go through it with them in class. This helps ensure first of all that the children remember to do the exercise, and secondly, that they realise what they have to do.
- If you give homework, it is important that you spend some time going through it in class. This is to make sure that the children realise that you think it is important.
- If you can, it is a good idea to discuss the idea of homework with the children in their mother tongue. Explain to them how it can help them – they need to understand that it is for their benefit, not yours! You could also agree with the children how much homework they should have, and what day would be the best for them.
- If it is possible, you can encourage the children to do their homework with a friend. They can make it a social experience and more motivating to do.
- Try to give a choice of homework exercises. The more the child can choose, the more involved they will be. You can also ask them to suggest homework exercises.