



**MERCHANT
TAYLORS'
SCHOOLS**

For Boys and Girls
aged 4 to 18 years

Homework Policy

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Author: R. Simpson

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HOMEWORK POLICY

Homework is an important feature of an academic education. It allows students the room to develop their own ideas as well as acting as a vehicle to consolidate learning which takes place in the classroom. It is a vital strand in the School's mission to develop **curiosity** and **independence** in our students. We envisage them gradually taking on more homework as they progress. This mirrors our intent that they should also take on more of the responsibility for their own learning rather than remaining over-reliant perhaps on teachers as the founts of all knowledge! Equally, in order to adequately prepare them for university, we need to ensure that they have developed their own robust way of doing things away from the prying eyes of teachers and parents. The **student planner** is an important tool here and we expect all students to develop their planning skills as they progress.

The amount of time allocated to each subject for homework in Years 7, 8 and 9 is intended to be a guide. In some subjects (such as mathematics) homework is set on a regular basis often to be given in the following day. Other subjects will combine a regular weekly diet with more extended pieces of work (eg projects in geography and history.) Ideally, over the course of a term, the overall allocation of homework should average out to match the advertised weekly guidelines. However, students and parents should note:

- It is most important for all boys to develop and maintain a regular habit of study at home. In the first 3 years of school, they should be doing between 1 and 2 hours of academic work at home each day, including weekends. During the fourth and fifth (GCSE) years, they should be spending at least 15 hours a week on academic study at home, i.e. about 2 hours every evening during the week and another 4 or 5 hours at the weekend. In the holidays, too, some time should be devoted to revision and/or coursework but teachers should recognise that the boys need a rest too and shouldn't overburden them (especially at half terms perhaps). In the Sixth Form, students should be devoting 16-18 hours a week to academic study at home, in addition to the work which is done during free periods at school. This means 2 or 3 hours every evening during the week and another 4 or 5 at the weekend. Students will also be expected to do some work during the holidays and a great deal, of course, immediately before public examination.
- Parents are given this guidance following a whole-school review of homework provision in 2011:
- "If your son is consistently spending more or less than the allotted time, please inform his Form Tutor. Boys in the Lower and Middle School have a set pattern of homework (with specific subjects allocated to particular days); boys in the Lower School – i.e. Years 7, 8 and 9 have a planner, which Form Tutors may ask to see.
 - Occasionally, additional time may be needed when writing up for Geography Field work, for example, or completing an extended piece of work. To balance this there may be occasions when little or no homework is set in that subject. For extended pieces, structured guidance will be given on how time should be allocated.
 - As indicated on the time allocation sheet there are subjects where the course does not require a regular weekly homework.
 - Homework is not set simply because time has been allocated for it, only where it is an integral part of each subject's programme at the discretion of staff. It may therefore not be appropriate to set homework in some subjects or on some occasions.
 - Homework should be treated seriously and done individually as a means of continuing and consolidating class work. It may involve reading from text or library books, learning

or practice in various skills. Though presentation is important, marks are given primarily for subject content.

- All boys are issued with School Homework Diaries (Planners) which should ideally be signed weekly by parents and checked by Form Tutors. The Deputy Head Academic has a timetable of “planner checks” (essentially a form per week) which allows him to keep a strategic eye on students who may have fallen by the wayside in terms of planning and homework organisation. Follow-up comes in the form of letters home to parents and an alert to form tutors to set up regular checks of their own until the problem is rectified.

LOWER SCHOOL

Timings are for guidance only and may well vary. In reality, students will tend to get a mixed diet of “regular” homeworks (eg Mathematics/Latin in the Lower School) where the emphasis is on consolidating classwork with extended/research pieces (eg Geography/History) designed to stretch them and develop independent research skills.

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
Mathematics	3 x 20 mins	3 x 20 mins	3 x 20 mins
English (&Drama from Y9)	1 x 20 mins 1 x 40 mins	1 x 20 mins 1 x 40 mins	1 x 20 mins 1 x 45 mins
French/Spanish (&German from Y9)	2 x 10 mins 1 x 20 mins	2 x 20 mins	1 x 20 mins 1 x 30 mins
Biology	Science 2x20 mins	1 x 20 mins	1 x 30 mins
Physics		1 x 20 mins	1 x 30 mins
Chemistry		1 x 20 mins	1 x 30 mins
Geography	1x20 mins each plus occasional project work	1x30 mins each plus project work	
History			
Religious Studies	1x20 mins(fortnightly)	1 x 20 mins	1 x 30 mins
Latin (+Greek/Classic in Y9)	2x20 mins	2 x 20 mins	2 x 30 mins
Design Technology	project work	1 x 30 mins*	1 x 30 mins*
Art		1 x 30 mins*	1 x 30 mins*
Music		1 x 30 mins*	-
ICT	none	project work	

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Although the homework timetable is based on the allocation of time to each GCSE subject as shown, the demands of GCSE and the nature of course work in many subjects will make it impossible to adhere strictly to this scheme.

In some subjects it is expected that homework will be completed on the day set and handed in the next day. At other times and in other subjects an extended period of time may be given for completion of the work and a date fixed for handing it in. This will obviously impose the need for careful organisation by boys of their time to avoid a pile up of work as deadlines approach. It is hoped that parents will help by encouraging their sons to organise their time sensibly.

It may also be necessary to set a piece of work requiring more than the allocated time. When this is the case, there should be occasions to compensate where little or no homework is set.

Homework should be treated seriously and done individually as a means of continuing and consolidating class work through reading, learning, research and practice in various skills. With the demise of conventional 'course work', where much of the writing up could be done at home, and the advent of higher levels of Controlled Assessment, it may be that the bulk of preparatory research and note-taking may shift to homework.

	Year 10	Year 11
English	2 x 30	2 x 30
Mathematics	3 x 20	2 x 30
<u>Options</u>		
Geography/History	2 x 30 or 1 x 60	2 x 30 or 1x 60
French/German/Spanish	2 x 30	3 x 30
Latin/Classical Civilisation	2 x 30	2 x 30
Biology/Chemistry/Physics	2 x 30 each	2 x 30 each
Additional Science	3 x 30	3 x 30
Art/Drama/Engineering/Music/PE	1 x 60	1 x 60
ICT	2 x 30	2 x 30

Allocations are minutes per subject, per week.

SIXTH FORM

Homework at AS/A2 level will be set as required by the demands of the subject and as is appropriate to the stage of the course.

In addition to developing relevant subject skills the setting of homework should also foster the ability to pursue independent study and show academic initiative. A Level students will have timetabled none contact periods during which they are encouraged to get on with independent study. Supervised private study is available for sixth form boys in Milton House during all lessons. We expect that by this point they are able to manage more “lumpy” workloads which demand a degree of forward planning and the ability to cope without the “drip-drip” format lower down the school. Of course, students who still struggle to manage their time will receive continued support from their tutors in the form of both sticks and negotiated deadline extensions. Our overarching intention is to make sure students have sufficient depth of knowledge/understanding to challenge for top grades but also that they are able to stand on their own two feet when it comes to university courses.

Boys undertaking EPQs will be expected to have completed the vast majority of their research project at home, under supervisor guidance. Those submitting for the November series will be expected to have completed the majority of their research report / log over the long summer vacation, and then to prepare for the assessed presentation usually held in early October. Those submitting for the June series will be expected to have completed all work, including the presentation, by the first week in May.

Amended October 2013 RAS