



# EEB3 | Homework Guidelines

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## 1. Introduction

Homework has for years been an integral part of a pupil's educational journey. As education has developed, transformed, and progressed over the years, so has the format and role of Homework.

The aim of this document, in line with the framework document provided to European Schools by the Office of the Secretary-General (<https://www.eursec.eu/BasicTexts/2022-09-D-84-en-1.pdf>), is to provide the reader with important, main information on how Homework is organized at EEB3 and to provide the reason why Homework is an integral part of our school system.

This document draws on the school's views and expectations regarding the function, value, purpose, volume, and other aspects of Homework. It aims at greater harmonisation of Homework across the different levels and linguistic sections in the school. This is important in a European, multi-cultural environment where there are different methodologies, approaches, and perspectives when it comes to Homework policies.

The aim of these guidelines is to create a framework for our school, EEB3. The following information should be interpreted and understood as guidelines. EEB3 recognises and trusts the professional body of its teaching staff who have experience, are highly skilled and are respected and trusted with the job they are doing. The aim of this document is not to tie a teacher's hands and be over-prescriptive but to act as a guidance within which to do our work as educators.

## 2. What is Homework and what is its purpose?

There are many definitions of what Homework is.

### At EEB3, Homework:

- is any work /activity that pupils are asked to do by their teachers outside their lesson time (studying is included here as Homework).
- consists of learning activities to be carried out outside the classroom learning environment and outside of school hours. If needed and only, when necessary, Homework allows the pupils to complete a task that started in class.
- is work that is done after school by the pupil, is then corrected at school and the pupil is given feedback. Feedback can be given in various forms and by various actors involved. Homework feedback can also include peer assessment or self-assessment.
- should be guided and monitored by their teacher in a way that pupils understand how these tasks are contributing to their learning.
- should not replace lessons or content to be taught.
- is not simply a prolongation of schoolwork. It takes on a more creative form and encourage the child's autonomy regarding intellectual and expressive activity.
- is not to be done by other persons other than the pupil and the school does not expect parents to take on the role of teacher at home. Equally, parents should avoid taking on this role. Parents take an interest in their child's Homework; they supervise them and check what they have done.
- should include the development of pupils' self-assessment skills through their engagement with Homework to become more independent and autonomous learners.



**Homework can have many purposes. Among these are:**

- connect the learning process between home and school and so that pupils' experience of learning can be enriched. It gives the parents an overview of their child's schoolwork and the chance to praise their endeavours.
- provide pupils with opportunities either independently or with support to prepare for classroom learning, revise, practice and consolidate what has already been learned in the classroom and extend and apply what they have learned in new contexts.
- helps pupils get ready for activities that will occur later in the classroom. Homework also helps pupils develop their confidence in preparing themselves for work to come or reinforcing learning that has already taken place.
- works on self-discipline skills such as time management, task completion, following instructions, etc.
- encourages pupils to take personal responsibility for their schoolwork and become more autonomous for example through independent study and research.
- stimulate and satisfy pupils' curiosity.
- help pupils evaluate their own work and progress.
- for pupils with individual educational needs may differ in approach from the one proposed in this document depending on specific needs.

**3. What are the different types of Homework that can be given?**

Homework takes into consideration the abilities of the pupils and their rate of learning. Teachers use their professional know-how to determine which Homework is appropriate for their pupils. Homework can have many formats, including:

- Completion of work started in class
- Revision for tests, or learning work
- Project/display work
- Additional reading to complete class work
- Preparations for presentations and group work
- Research
- Daily practice routines
- Open-ended tasks
- Long term projects
- Pupil- initiated inquiries
- Cross- disciplinary investigations
- Reading, Drawing, Writing
- Collecting specimens, pictures, and general background on a variety of themes and subjects
- Additional tasks to support work done in class and develop certain skills
- Any other tasks that are pedagogically relevant by the teacher



#### 4. What are the main characteristics of Homework?

- It should be appropriate, proportionate, and achievable to the pupil's skills and knowledge, level and age.
- It should be reasonable in terms of effort and time.
- It should be clear in its objective.
- It should contain interesting, varied, and challenging tasks.
- It should be purposeful, meaningful, and relevant to the school curriculum.
- It should be proportional to the number of periods taught per week.
- Instructions and materials on which Homework is based should be clear.
- Deadlines should be clearly stated.
- It should be differentiated where necessary.
- It should be such that the pupils can generally complete it independently.
- It should feature in classroom discussions.
- It is assigned by teachers who are autonomous to assign Homework related to what pupils are learning and how they are progressing.
  - Assigned Homework should feature in classroom discussions.
  - Pupils should receive feedback about their Homework, and they should understand how this helps them to advance their learning journey.
  - Through self-assessment, pupils' engagement with Homework should help them to develop their independent learning skills and begin to set their own learning goals.
- It should not take up all the pupils' leisure time after school. The school also recognises the importance of leisure time for the pupils and the place that after-school activities have in their development. After a rather long day's work, pupils need to take a break and relax, just like adults. Teachers need to be cognisant of our pupils' long days when assigning Homework and aim to find a good balance.

#### 5. How often is Homework given at EEB3?

The following Homework duration is only an approximation, an indication of the time we think an average pupil should spend in out-of-class tasks to progress steadily. Of course, this time must be used efficiently, being completely focused and without any distractions. If the time that pupils spend on their Homework is significantly greater, the pupils or the parents could contact the class teacher or the corresponding educational advisor.

##### Nursery

No Homework is generally set in the nursery classes. Occasionally, fun activities to do with the family may be considered and proposed.

##### Primary

Teachers are free to assign Homework based on what students are learning and their progress. When assigning Homework, teachers must remain mindful of students' well-being.

- On average, the time spent on Homework should not exceed:

Years 1-2	<b>20-30</b> minutes per day
Year 3	<b>30-45</b> minutes per day
Years 4-5	<b>45-60</b> minutes per day

It needs to be emphasised that the times suggested are a guide and need not necessarily occur each day or be done all at once. There may be days when Homework is not given and other periods where some more intense work may be needed. However, when Homework is given teachers will keep the above-mentioned time frames in mind.

- Where possible, pupils should be given a number of days to complete their Homework.
- Where possible, Homework can be set at the beginning of the week and set for the duration of the whole week.
- The content of the Homework should be such that pupils can complete it independently as much as possible. The school should avoid imposing the role of the teacher upon the parent.

### Secondary

When assigning Homework, teachers must remain mindful of students' well-being.

S1	<b>45</b> minutes to <b>1</b> hour per day
S2-S3	<b>1</b> to <b>1,5</b> hours per day
S4-S5	<b>1,5</b> to <b>2</b> hours per day
S6-S7	<b>2</b> to <b>2,5</b> hours per day

It needs to be emphasised that the times suggested are a guide and need not necessarily occur each day or be done all at once. There may be days when Homework is not given and other periods where some more intense work may be needed. However, when Homework is given teachers will keep the above-mentioned time frames in mind.

### Some principles to keep in mind when considering the time allocated to Homework:

- ▶ The time used for Homework should increase from lower classes to upper classes.
- ▶ Some tasks such as reading novels, preparing extended essays, or completing longer projects will require more than the time allocated. This is especially true for exam classes.
- ▶ S1-S7: No A mark Homework or tests should be set for the following day.
- ▶ S1-S7: No A mark Homework or tests should be set for the first day after the holidays, except for the official exams.
- ▶ Secondary school pupils may have to employ some extra time during the weekends or during the exam periods. Ideally, Homework is not given on a Friday for the following Monday, however, this does depend on the timetable and there may be the same subject that has lessons scheduled on Friday and Monday and so this situation of not giving Homework from the Friday to the Monday cannot always be avoided.

- ▶ The nature, frequency and volume of Homework are left to the professional judgement of the teachers. However, they should consider the number of periods they teach per week and to give, if necessary, a weekly proportional Homework for their pupils.
- ▶ Teachers are reminded to consider reasonable time frames in accordance with tasks set and to keep in mind other tasks, tests, and exams the pupil may have.
- ▶ Teachers should avoid posting Homework on an evening or at the weekend on SMS without having discussed it with the students in class. There is no guarantee that the students would have seen the post and instructions. Homework should not be posted on an evening with a deadline for the next day if it has not already been assigned in class.
- ▶ Short Homework exercises such as revision exercises can be set for the following day, but longer Homework that counts towards the A grade should not.
- ▶ The school recognises the importance of leisure time and extra-curricular activities. Therefore, on the longer school days Homework should be within the above-mentioned time limits.
- ▶ Pupils should, when possible, be given a number of days to complete their Homework. The following model is a suggestion: Homework on Monday given for Thursday (Homework on Thursday given for Monday). This suggestion is also for Language 1 and Language 2 teachers. However, it is to be acknowledged that this does depend on the pupil's timetable.
- ▶ The content of the Homework should be such that pupils can complete it independently. Students are actively encouraged to complete Homework on their own. It is the most effective way of learning.

## 6. What are the responsibilities of teachers at EEB3 regarding Homework?

The nature, frequency and volume of Homework set are left to the professional judgement of the teachers. Teachers will establish a realistic deadline for Homework which pupils need to respect.

- Teachers will keep accurate records of Homework set and submitted.
- They will assess it in the foreseen timeframe providing feedback and support.
- Homework that is submitted late without any justified reason will have a negative effect on the pupil's mark.
- Teachers, especially language teachers, should make sure that pupils learn how to quote and reference the sources they have used (this applies to writing in general not only for Homework).
- For teachers, Homework is a means to encourage the pupils' autonomy and at the same time to exercise their memory and develop their organisational skills in their own schoolwork. It offers teachers a means to gauge in how far the pupils have assimilated the schoolwork.
- All main Homework tasks must be written in the agenda or in SMS depending on the cycle. Performance in Homework should be considered as part of the overall assessment of the pupil.
- When giving Homework and setting deadlines, teachers are encouraged to see what other Homework the class have in other subjects to ensure that a minimum level of Homework is guaranteed for pupils and a fair distribution of Homework as much as possible.
- Homework is corrected and/ or marked regularly. This can include peer assessment and self-assessment.

- During the time when there are B tests in S4 and S5, and in the week before exams in S5, 6 and 7, Homework should be reduced as much as possible. The pupils need to focus on revision. Revision work can be given. Short Homework to clarify understanding of class material can also be given. If Homework has not been done, teachers are invited to apply a staggered approach of consequences, if needed. Extra work can be an educational measure considered. If a pupil continues not to take responsibility for their work and does not give Homework repeatedly, a teacher may need to give sanctions in line with the school's [Good Behaviour policy-secondary cycle](#)
- Performance in Homework should be considered as part of the overall formative assessment of the pupil.

## 7. What are the responsibilities of pupils at EEB3 regarding Homework?

### As a pupil:

- You are responsible for taking down Homework given, regularly checking agenda and/or SMS for Homework and meeting deadlines. Doing set Homework is obligatory.
- If you are absent, it is your responsibility to find out what work has been given and catch up.
- For pupils who are on long certified absence (for example a number of weeks or months) the school offers the services of a Home School Liaison Officer.
- You need to plan your time so that you do not leave work for the last minute having to rush to complete it. One way is to develop an effective individual study timetable.
- You are responsible for a daily revision of the lessons of the day. This is not part of the time allocated to Homework, unless specified by the teacher.
- If you are using reference books or other sources to complete your assignments, remember to quote properly. Ask your teacher how to do this.
- Do not cut and paste from the Internet. Use your own words and list the sources you have used. Do not plagiarize. Using AI to plagiarize is not allowed.
- Seek assistance from teachers, parents, or caregivers when difficulties arise.
- Use your lesson-free periods at school to do Homework at the study rooms or the library.
- Ensure that Homework is completed to a high standard and is neatly presented.
- If you are unable to complete your Homework, you can:
  - ▶ Try and remember techniques you used in class to solve the same type of problem.
  - ▶ Take note of your problem-solving method in order to share your difficulties with your teacher and seek guidance.
  - ▶ Avoid contacting your teacher on Teams after school hours or on the weekend. This is not allowed. Contact should be made during school hours.

## 8. What are the responsibilities of parents/legal representatives at EEB3 regarding Homework?

Homework provides parents and caregivers with insights as to what is being taught at school. Many of our pupils have already acquired solid study habits at home. They have the initiative to start work and can work independently and may need very little involvement from their parents. Homework is attributed to help students become autonomous. It should be completed on their own as much as possible.

However, we would like to offer some tips for parents that can help especially younger children to tackle Homework successfully.

- Reinforce the idea of the importance of Homework. Set a positive atmosphere around it. Homework should not be a source of stress and conflict in the family.
- Check your child's Homework in their agenda or SMS. In the secondary cycle, the key Homework tasks are placed on SMS. Not all Homework is placed on SMS as pupils also need to learn to be responsible in taking down set Homework, time management and be more autonomous.
- Encourage your child to take notes concerning Homework assignments. They should use the school agenda for that purpose.
- Provide a suitable study area and the necessary tools to complete the Homework assignments. Pupils should ideally have a quiet room with comfortable furniture, well illuminated, with adequate temperature and with resources they can use, for example, reference books, dictionaries, computer, etc.
- Make sure that after-school activities are compatible with having enough time for Homework and other family activities.
- Agree with your child on a specific Homework time. Plan a Homework schedule. Allow free time for recreation when assignments have been completed.
- Be careful with the time your children spend watching television and/or on electronic device use for recreation or communication with friends and make sure that sources of distraction are controlled during Homework time.
- Younger children may need more parental assistance with Homework than older children. Go over Homework assignments with your child. When questions about assignments arise and your child calls for help, ask them questions (elicit) or work through an example rather than simply providing the answer. Do several problems or questions together, then observe your child doing the next one or two and give feedback.
- Praise your child's efforts.
- Especially in the younger classes it is very important that the pupils practice reading with their parents every day for 10-15 minutes. The PISA results show that children whose parents read tend to do better academically. A child who sees their parents reading may be more encouraged to read themselves.



## 9. How does differentiation feature in Homework giving?

Where and when necessary, teachers also practice differentiation and personalised teaching when assigning Homework in order to integrate the different learning styles and profiles.

For more information about EEB3's Educational Support Guidelines please [consult the document](#) on the school website.

## 10. What communication is to be expected regarding Homework given at EEB3?

### Primary

Homework in the primary cycle is communicated through the students' agenda.

### Secondary

SMS is our school's online School Management System, which allows one to access, view and manage pupils, staff and classes (personal information, timetables, absences). Key Homework tasks are uploaded on SMS.

- ▶ New parents/legal representatives will receive their access code at the end of August (before the start of the school year). Microsoft Office 365 is an online platform which the school uses to allow pupils and teachers to communicate, collaborate and create and share documents.
- ▶ Pupils will receive their access code to O365 during the first week of school.

In case of lost information about accounts, or for further information regarding SMS and O365:

- For pupil accounts (SMS & O365): [see this link](#)
- For parents/legal representatives'/legal representatives' accounts (SMS): send an email request to [IXL-EXECUTIVE-ASSISTANT@eursc.eu](mailto:IXL-EXECUTIVE-ASSISTANT@eursc.eu)
- Pupils have a right to be informed of their academic performance and grading criteria. A and B marks are to be found on SMS.

## Use of SMS

### **For ALL years:**

At the beginning of the school year in September, parents/legal representatives will be informed, via SMS, of the following: Who the teacher is, their reception times and how they can be contacted?

### **Secondary Cycle (General Issues)**

- ▶ Textbooks being used in class.
- ▶ Mandatory events during the school year.
- ▶ An overview of what parents/legal representatives/pupils should expect for the upcoming school year. This is the course description which is a short description of the course content.

### **For S1-S2-S3**

- ▶ Attendance and absences, including late arrivals.
- ▶ Key criteria for grading
- ▶ **Key tasks and their due date (main works and their deadlines, including dates of all tests, exams, and important assignments. These will be uploaded prior to the assigned date.)**
- ▶ Grades for main tasks/assignments (grades for main works given)



### **For S4-S5-S6-S7**

- ▶ Attendance and absences, including late arrivals.
- ▶ Key criteria for grading
- ▶ **Key tasks and their due date (main works and their deadlines, including dates of all tests, exams and important assignments. These will be uploaded prior to the assigned date.)**
- ▶ Key dates for exams, tests, submissions deadlines
- ▶ Grading for B Tests and Examinations (once approved by Class Councils)

Information about Homework is found in the school's [Living Together Rules of Procedure](#)

### **11. How is Homework organized around the school holidays?**

**In the Primary School**, Homework during the holidays should be avoided if possible. However, there may be valid reasons for some Homework to be given. If no Homework is given, parents are encouraged to read with their children during their free time.

**In the Secondary school**, holidays may be a good time to review, catch up and read. Certain Homework assignments may be needed during the holidays, especially in the upper secondary years.

### **12. What occurs during examination periods in terms of Homework giving?**

#### **Examination periods**

Two weeks before examination period starts, teachers should communicate via SMS the content of what the exam will cover and what the pupils need to focus on in their studying and examination preparation.

In the week before examination periods (not including B test periods) and during examination periods Homework should be limited and should focus on the preparation of the examinations.

#### **Test in S1, S2 and S3**

When possible, tests in S1 and S2 should be limited to maximum 1 period. In S3, if the class has a double period, then the teacher has the option of a longer test.

If a student misses an examination, a medical certificate must be provided. The student cannot take the test at a later date without a medical certificate.

#### **B tests and long tests for S4 to S7 pupil and pre-Baccalaureate examinations for S7 pupils**

The school will provide a calendar for these tests and examinations.

In case one of these tests or exams is not done in the foreseen date due to a medical condition (on providing a medical certificate) it will be changed trying not to overload pupils with many tests and exams in the following weeks.

In S6 and S7, where a long test calendar is not provided, a discussion is held with the pupils to explore possible dates of the test. The final decision rests with the teacher. Teachers will inform pupils of any change in the long test calendar in a timely manner.

During exam times it is assumed that revision will be central focus of Homework, as much as possible.

### **13. Are there any other relevant documents regarding Homework in relation to the European School System?**

The European Schools have published the [European School Framework in Devising School Homework Policies](#)