

Scott Homework Essentials

At Scott Elementary, our goal is for homework to be authentic, meaningful, and engaging. Homework should be an extension of the learning that has taken place at school, rather than the introduction of new skills for students to attempt to learn on their own. Since young students are still developing study habits like concentration and self-regulation, assigning a large quantity of homework isn't very beneficial. Instead, we have chosen to keep homework focused on the essentials: reading, math, and spelling. The expectations for reading will be to read nightly using your child's guided reading books, library books, or other books that your child enjoys reading. The essentials for math will be math fact fluency in the younger grade levels and progress to problem solving using the math fact fluency in the older grade levels. Spelling words will come home routinely with a variety of ways to practice for the spelling test on Friday.

What Does Research Say About Homework Essentials?

The best homework tasks exhibit five characteristics. First, the task has a clear academic purpose, such as practice, checking for understanding, or applying knowledge or skills. Second, the task efficiently demonstrates student learning. Third, the task promotes ownership by offering choices and being personally relevant. Fourth, the task instills a sense of competence—the student can successfully complete it without help. Last, the task is aesthetically pleasing—it appears enjoyable and interesting (Vatterott, 2009).

Through automaticity students free up their working memory and can devote it to problem solving and learning new concepts and skills (Geary, 1994). Quite simply, a lack of fluency in basic math fact recall significantly hinders a child's subsequent progress with problem-solving, algebra and higher-order math concept.

Math anxiety starts when children fall behind and can't keep up. To avoid these anxieties, students' early elementary years should focus on learning the foundational math skills needed for later years – math facts are among those important math skills.

(<http://www.k5learning.com/blog/why-do-kids-need-learn-math-facts>)

Our brains develop as we “feed” them with experiences. The experience of reading (whether you're the reader or the one being read to) activates and “exercises” many of the areas of the brain. The visual cortex works as your eyes track the words on the page and look at the illustrations. Your memory makes connections between what you already know about the topic of the story and its content. You integrate new information learned through reading further strengthening and growing your network of knowledge. Reading provides one of the most enriching and complex brain activities available in life. (<http://www.k12reader.com/why-read-20-minutes-a-day/>)

Why Can't I Skip My 20 Minutes of Reading Tonight?

Student "A"
reads **20 minutes**
each day

3600 minutes in
a school year

Student "B"
reads **5 minutes**
each day

900 minutes in
a school year

Student "C"
reads **1 minute**
each day

180 minutes in
a school year

1,800,000 words



90th percentile

282,000 words



50th percentile

8,000 words



10th percentile

By the end of 6th grade Student "A" will have read the equivalent of 60 whole school days. Student "B" will have read only 12 school days. Which student would you expect to have a better vocabulary? Which student would you expect to be more successful in school...and in life?

(Nagy & Herman, 1987)

References:

Geary, D. C. (1994). Children's mathematical development: Research and practical applications.

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Why do kids need to learn math facts? (n.d) Retrieved August 08, 2017, from

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