

Should there be homework in the holidays?

A summer of sunshine – and studies – lies ahead for some students.

What you need to know

- Summer holidays are under way across the UK, and some pupils will have taken home a list of assignments to complete.
- The Government used to decide how much homework pupils should do each week in England, with a maximum recommended amount of two and a half hours a night for 14 to 16-year-olds, but now it's up to headteachers to decide. They also decide whether to set homework during the holidays – some schools do, and some don't.
- A global study of 15-year-olds found that British students spent an average of 4.9 hours per week on homework during term time, less than France, Italy, Spain and the US.



School holidays are a great time of year – six or more weeks of sunshine (if you're lucky), days out with family and friends and – for some of you – a bit of holiday homework. Even though the term has ended, many of you will have taken home projects and assignments to complete during the summer break. These tasks are designed to keep brains active and help pupils remember what they learned in the last term, but many people think they get in the way of other activities that should be enjoyed while away from school, like playing outdoors and pursuing your personal interests. There are no rules on whether children should be given work to do during the holidays – it's up to headteachers to decide. So, should schools set homework for the holidays?

Yes – it will help you do well at school

Brains, particularly young ones, need to be regularly stimulated to prevent knowledge being lost. The results of an important study in the US showed that during their 12-week summer break, the average US pupil loses 2.6 months' worth of maths ability – meaning by the time classes resume, they will be around 10 weeks behind where they were at the start of the summer. Holiday homework makes sure everyone returns to school with at least the same level of knowledge as they had when they left. A few hours of homework won't get in the way of having fun, and by studying for short stints, you'll demonstrate great self-motivation. Lots of school work is interesting, so there's no reason summer homework can't be fun.

No – summer holidays should be stress-free

Summer is a time to relax and enjoy activities that aren't taught in school, and homework just gets in the way. It also stops you from playing outside and getting exercise in the sunniest months of the year. Besides, not all children have access to a computer over the summer, and not everyone has parents who have time to help them with homework, which might give an unfair advantage to children who do. Students who live in countries that don't set homework during summer holidays perform just as well, or even better, in exams as those who do, meaning all that extra studying might not be worth it anyway. Children are tested at school now more than ever, so the summer holidays should be free from the stress of schoolwork.

YES

Three reasons why you should be given summer homework

- 1 Homework keeps your brain active and gets you ready for a return to school.
- 2 The motivation it takes to do homework in the holidays gives you important life skills, like self-discipline.
- 3 Homework doesn't have to stop you having a fun summer – there's still plenty of time for playing and relaxing.

NO

Three reasons why you shouldn't be given summer homework

- 1 Summer is for having fun, getting outdoors and doing what you love – not homework.
- 2 Studying during the summer doesn't lead to better performance during exams, so there's no need for it.
- 3 Some children may be disadvantaged if they can't access the right technology to complete their summer assignments.

THE WEEKLY POLL

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YES

NO



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