

Steps to Success

Middle school is a bridge between elementary studies and high school. During middle school, students form and develop habits which – if they're good habits – can lead to success in high school and beyond. If your student comes home after school and says that he/she has no homework or that he/she finished everything in study hall, what your student is really telling you is that he/she needs your help.

Steps you can take as a parent to assist your child in developing better study habits:

- Help your student **choose a quiet place to study at home** that's free from distractions, including cell phones, TVs, video games, etc.
- Require your student to **be in the study place for a minimum of one hour each night** Monday – Thursday and one day during the weekend. The hour does not have to be one solid block of time. Three 20-minute segments or two 30-minute segments would probably be the most productive; longer times can be scheduled before tests or when projects are due if necessary. Also, the study time does not have to be scheduled for the same time each day but should be planned around extracurricular activities, practices, favorite shows, family activities, etc. The important thing is that it be scheduled and be treated as a priority.
- Ask your student **set up the schedule for each week**, helping them to decide on how much time to spend on each subject area, taking into account tests and long-term projects. A list of suggestions for each subject is included below.
- **Check the student planner.** The box for each subject should be filled in each day with what was accomplished in class and/or any assignments given. This is especially important for students who have a pattern of late/missing work. The Middle School Assignment blog can be accessed through the htschool.org site. If you have questions, ask the student to explain the assignment and/or ask to see the completed work.
- **Check PowerSchool** to keep current on test grades and overall grade average. Check with Mrs. Kelly if you have difficulty accessing the site.

Suggestions for Scheduling Study Time in Each Subject Area

(outside of assigned written work)

Religion: Chapters in the religion book are relatively short with a test following each chapter. Students should plan on spending from 5-10 minutes each day reading over the material discussed in class with attention paid to bold face or italicized terms and definitions. Chapter sub headings and paragraph main ideas can be turned into questions to aid review. Example: “Building Friendship with Jesus” can become “How can we build friendship with Jesus?” Students may also have study guides and notes that they can review.

Language Arts: Each week students should use their performance on the spelling pretest to determine how much time should be spent reviewing each night. Weeks with more difficult words will require more review time than easier weeks. Often we divide the weekly lists into smaller groups of words so that the students are focusing on no more than five or six words a night. Before a literature test students should review the “Before Reading” section, the story, and the story vocab. There are also questions in the margins to aid in review. Each student has a Pearson page that gives access to the textbook online as well as other resources to aid in reviewing lessons, including audio text, videos, and vocabulary games.

Social Studies: As in religion, the material covered in class can be reviewed each night and the chapter subheadings turned into questions for review. If there are illustrations, tables, or charts, can the student explain how they are connected to the chapter? Students can review lessons in their social studies workbooks. Students don’t have to wait until the night before to study for a test.

Science: Students can make flash cards with important terms or concepts from the lessons they’re working on. Then they can study the flash cards each night for 5 minutes. Students should also review any experiments or projects that were part of the class and be able to explain the purpose and what conclusions they can draw from data collected.

Spanish: Flash cards can also be an effective study tool for Spanish vocabulary. There are also lists of vocabulary words for practice. Students can practice both written and oral expression and take advantage of online resources suggested by the teacher..

Math: Students can study math each night by reviewing terms, examples, and formulas presented in the text and by working the odd-numbered problems in the section being studied. They can then self-correct by finding the answers in the back of the book. They can use this strategy to study any areas of math they feel are weak and for extra practice before a test.

These are only suggestions to show what a student can do when written work is completed and to show why “I don’t have any homework” is not an accurate statement. Each student’s study plan will be personal, based on what is due and which areas need the most attention. The important thing is that they practice the self-discipline of study for one hour each day and learn to be responsible for balancing free time, study time, and activity time – an important skill as they get ready to enter the busy high school years.