

Bethel Middle School Homework Policy

Final version

The faculty and staff at BMS recognize the importance of homework in its role of contributing toward building responsibility, self-discipline, and lifelong learning habits. It is the intention of BMS faculty to assign relevant, challenging, and meaningful homework assignments that reinforce classroom learning objectives.

Generally speaking, homework assignments will provide:

- practice exercises to reinforce classroom learning.
- preview activities to prepare for subsequent lessons.
- extension and or enrichment activities to transfer new skills and knowledge to new situations and/or scenarios,
- creative activities to integrate skills toward the *completion of a new product*.

Guidelines for the Completion of Homework

The faculty and staff at BMS *believe* that quality is more important than quantity. Therefore individual, nightly homework assignments will be relatively brief.

1. All assignments must meet minimum writing expectations. Work should be legible, on clean paper with appropriate heading and margins. Attention should be paid to appropriate spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. Final (non-draft) writing pieces should be completed in ink *or typed*.
2. Homework **is due when it is due**. *When circumstances arise that make it impossible for homework to be completed, it is the responsibility of the student to notify the teacher in advance.*
3. Homework must be complete. Always and everywhere, students must demonstrate effort on their homework assignments.

Homework Assignments

Generally speaking, homework falls into two categories:

1. Nightly assignments – these are assignments that may immediately precede or follow a lesson or series of lessons in a given class. They are generally focused around a specific piece of content or skill and are assigned on a nightly basis. *Some of these assignments will be assessed for quality, while others will be monitored for completion.*
2. Long-term assignments – these are assignments that are often project-based, extensive in nature and require a significant amount of time to complete. Individual teachers will assign due dates and criteria for completion depending on the assignment.

Nightly homework can be expected Monday through Thursday. In some cases, homework may need to be assigned over weekends in order to keep pace with particular curricula. Nightly homework **will not be assigned** over holidays.

Depending on when they are assigned, long-term assignments may be expected to be worked on over a weekend or during a vacation period.

Long term assignments that are handed in late: The opportunity to earn full credit will be lost when assignments are handed in late.

Weight of Homework on Quarter Grades

In each subject, homework will be weighted as 15% of the total grade for the quarter. Individual assignments will be graded and assessed based on the above scales. The grades from individual assignments will be averaged to derive a quarter homework grade.

Uniform Homework Grading Rubric and Scale

The following rubric and scale will be used *for assessment of the quality of nightly assignments*. (This does not apply to *assignments that require more than one day to complete*).

Uniform Grading Rubric and Scale				
√++	√+	√	√-	0
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(F)
Outstanding	Well Done	Acceptable	Minimally Acceptable	Not Acceptable
Very well developed, excellent responses	Developed, thoughtful responses	Moderately developed responses	Brief or shallow responses	Missing or unacceptable responses
Complete	Complete	Complete	Incomplete	Incomplete
Best work is evident throughout.	Best work is evident.	Some effort evident	Minimum effort demonstrated	Clear lack of effort
Neat, legible throughout	Neat, legible	Neat, legible,	Messy	Illegible
Exceeds expectations	Meets writing expectations	Meets writing expectations	May not meet minimum writing expectations	Fails to meet minimum writing expectations
Directions followed	Directions followed	Directions followed	Some directions may have been followed	Directions not followed
			Little care or engagement	No care or

Demonstrates care and engagement	Demonstrates care and engagement	Demonstrates care and engagement	demonstrated	engagement demonstrated
Assignments Monitored for Completion		Complete	Incomplete	Missing

Homework Responsibilities

Student: It is the responsibility of the student to keep track of his/her assignments and their due dates. Teachers write assignments on the board and provide time for students to record assignments in their agenda books during class. In addition, teachers update their class websites weekly.

Parent: In order for a student to give homework assignments their due attention, students need:

1. a clean, quiet, well-lit study area.
2. a regularly scheduled time to complete homework.
3. feedback from you regarding their work. Avoid asking your child if he/she completed the homework. Rather, request to see it and compare it to the rubric described above. This will accomplish a number of things. Most importantly, it will open the lines of communication with you and your child about academics. Secondly, it will provide your child an opportunity to hear feedback and underscore the importance of completing homework. Finally, It will give you the opportunity to assess your own child's understanding.

The amount of time a typical middle school child should spend completing homework can range anywhere from 30 minutes to two hours depending on the number of assignments. A typical nightly assignment should require no more than about 15 minutes to complete. If you see that your child is spending an inordinate amount of time completing homework, please contact the guidance counselor to arrange a meeting and look into the matter.

Teacher: Nightly assignments will be relevant, challenging, and meaningful. Instructions will be made clear, and time will be provided to answer any questions. Feedback will be provided in a timely manner. Parents will be contacted if a pattern of poor or non-completion emerges.

Illness or Absences

Students will be provided a reasonable amount of time to complete assignments missed as a result of illness or other excused absence. Generally, missed assignments will be due the day after a student returns to school, with one extra day given for each day missed.

Should a student fail to complete an assignment within the allotted time, credit will not be awarded.

Homework Tips and Strategies

CPR for Homework Problems:

C = *Check the assignment; take out notes; read directions.*

P = *Phone a classmate or ask a parent for assistance.*

R = *Research problems or check on-line sources for help.*

Make the best effort possible.

Rewards/Consequences

Students who faithfully complete their homework will have a menu of rewards from which to choose. Rewards will be assessed monthly. Along the same lines, chronic non-completers will face a ladder of consequences. Homework completion will be monitored through weekly Hands Up meetings.