



James Dougherty Elementary

2019-20 Homework and Grading Plan

Homework

James Dougherty Elementary is committed to supporting children to realize their full academic, social, and emotional potential. An essential component to meet this goal is to establish strong partnerships between staff, students, and parents. We believe homework should be purposeful, challenging and relevant, and extend student learning to directly influence students' ability to meet our district's high academic standards. However, it is important that students are not over-extended with homework, and extracurricular activities. A balance between down time, family, school and other activities must be prioritized to promote positive social-emotional health, and well-being.

"Homework is defined as independent preview, practice or completion of skills and concepts taught during class, projects, test and performance preparation, and daily independent reading. Teachers will align homework with daily lessons. As appropriate, teachers are encouraged to provide assignments in advance." (AR 6154: Instruction)

Parent/Student Support of Homework

Students can be successful in completing homework on time by bringing home the necessary supplies from school that are required to complete the assigned work. Support your child by:

- Providing an appropriate homework environment:
 - Find a quiet focused place to work
 - Limit and monitor television viewing, computer/cell-phone/electronic device usage, and social networking.
- Fostering time management and organizational skills by monitoring that your child:
 - Is focused and working steadily.
 - Has done what was assigned. If you are unsure, check your child's planner, check with the teacher, check the teacher's website, or call another student's

family.

- Place homework in his/her backpack.
- Teaching study habits:
 - Ask your child questions about what he/she is learning. Use the textbook, any handouts/notes/study guides to assist you.
- Reading with your child:
 - Listen to your child read and/or do some shared reading.
- Connecting with your child's teacher to gather information about progress:
 - Email or call your child's teacher (prior to contacting the administration) with any questions or concerns
 - Arrange a conference
 - Request a progress report

Homework Expectations and Requirements

- Assigned independent reading shall not exceed an additional 20 to 30 minutes per night.
- Projects and research should include clear checkpoints and be reinforced by the teacher to monitor progress toward completion.
- Students are expected to spend the **maximum** amount of minutes on homework, **excluding** nightly reading as follows:
 - Kinder 10 minutes
 - 1st Grade 10 minutes
 - 2nd Grade 20 minutes per night
 - 3rd Grade 30 minutes per night
 - 4th Grade 40 minutes per night
 - 5th Grade 50 minutes per night(This time does not include the aforementioned independent reading time)

The amount of time a student spends on assigned homework depends on many factors such as the student's needs, learning ability, achievement levels, subject, testing schedule, and assigned homework due dates. Time spent on homework should be balanced with the importance of personal and family well-being and the wide array of family obligations. In the event that homework is consistently exceeding the guidelines for your child, please contact your child's teacher to arrange a conference.

Students and parents/guardians may obtain information about homework expectations through teacher websites, email, newsletters, and at Back-to-School Night.

Homework Policies

- Grade level teacher teams will coordinate homework across the grade level in order to be consistent with the assigned homework and collection.
- Tests or assessments shall not fall on the first school day immediately after a weekend or holiday, including state testing (CAASPP).
- Due dates for projects shall not fall on the first school day immediately after a weekend or holiday.
- Except for reading, homework at the elementary level should not be assigned over weekends, holidays, or extended school breaks.
- No homework will be assigned during the window of state testing (CAASPP), with the exception of grade level appropriate nightly reading. The above guidelines are for Monday through Thursday.
- Project-based and long-term assignments should primarily be undertaken and completed in the classroom. Some portions of projects may be assigned as homework; however these tasks should not require group participation, significant assistance from parents, or costly materials.
- Project due dates, test dates, and extra-curricular activities/performances will be communicated to families via classroom newsletters, email, homework packets, and for grades 3-5 in the school agendas.
- The fifth grade staff will work closely with the middle school to aid in the transition from elementary to middle school.

Additional Support

- Homework will reflect the accommodations and modifications of curriculum for as stated in a student's IEP or 504 plan.
- English Language Learners may be assigned modified homework by his/her classroom teacher and/or the English Language Development Specialist.
- A student in Special Education may be assigned modified homework by his/her classroom teacher and/or the Resource Specialist.

Communication

Communication concerning daily homework, projects and assessments will be shared weekly through any or all of the following: classroom newsletters, teacher websites, and/or other means at the teacher's discretion. If there is a concern regarding a class assigned project or homework it needs to be addressed to the classroom teacher via email, phone call, or in-person conversation.

Make-Up Work

- Students are expected to complete assigned work, quizzes, and tests given during their absence. They have an equal number of days to complete missed work, as they were absent (example: 1 day absence = 1 day extra to complete the assignment; 2 days of absence=2 days extra to complete the assignment) without a decrease in the student grade/credit.

Independent Study

It is imperative that your student attends school daily. Lost classroom time is difficult to replace. However, if you find that you need an extended absence during the school year, you will need to request an Independent Study Contract (ISC). Below are the guidelines and policies for requesting an Independent Study Contract.

1. Parent must notify administration at their student's school at least 10 school days prior to the absence.
2. Students whose achievement level is below grade level standards may not be eligible. (There is no evidence that the student will work independently to complete the program.)
3. Students who have had an Independent Study Contract in the past and did not successfully complete it, are not eligible for a new contract.
4. Contracts are issued for a minimum of 5 school days and a maximum of 10 days. After 11 days your child will be dropped.
5. Contracts may not be faxed or emailed, unless worked out with the administration.
6. A student with disabilities, as defined in Ed Code 56026, is not eligible for Independent Study unless his/her individualized education program specifically provides for such participation (Ed Code 51745).
7. Student must turn in work on or before the agreed contract date for absences to be cleared and to avoid truancy procedures.
8. Students may receive an incomplete or drop a grade on the report card due to incomplete class participation.
9. Students who do not turn in work by the contract agreed date will be marked unexcused and will be tagged truant.

Contracts must be approved by the teacher and the administration. A conference must be held 10 days prior to the independent study. The approval or denial of the Independent Study Contract will occur at the meeting with the administration. Please do not make travel plans before this approval.

Grading

Grading is an important means of communicating student performance and progress throughout the school year. Grades are an impartial, consistent reflection of the quality of the student's work and his/her mastery of course standards. Student learning and mastery of content is supported by daily attendance, homework completion, class participation, academic

demonstration of knowledge, and academic honesty (BP 5121).

Parents and guardians will be notified of student progress through the progress report and report card updates provided each trimester. Progress reports only need to be provided to a student who is not meeting grade level academic and/or behavior and study skill standards at the time of the progress reporting date. However, at any time, a parent/guardian may ask for a meeting to discuss their child's progress.

Grade Scale and Assignments

- Grades are based primarily on student's mastery of the course content standards utilizing a rubric and/or grading scale. Student mastery can be demonstrated in a variety of ways, including but not limited to: classwork, oral and written performances, projects, teacher observation, and tests and quizzes.
- Students in the 1st and 2nd grade will receive a DRA (Diagnostic Reading Assessment) score determined by the DUSD benchmark levels.
- Students in Kindergarten through the 5th grade will receive writing grades based upon the rubrics provided by the Dublin Unified School District for the different genres of writing.
- Students shall be given multiple attempts at mastery of course content standards. (AR 5121)
- Teachers are encouraged to consider student's later performances, if they reflect mastery of previous curriculum. Teachers are discouraged from giving 'high stakes' assessments that may substantially lower a trimester grade. (AR 5121)
- Curriculum, homework, and grading will be coordinated, consistent, and aligned among grade level teams. (AR 5121)
- Teachers in Kindergarten through 5th grade will continue to work collaboratively to develop and implement a rubric system that gives parents/guardians more information about their children's developmental levels and promotes students' self-esteem and experiences of success (AR 5121)

Policies and Procedures

- Students in the 4th and 5th grade will be given an opportunity to demonstrate subject mastery through test corrections and/or re-taking assessments.
- Teachers in the 4th and 5th grade will remind students of missing assignments to minimize the amount of zeros recorded for missing student work
- In the event a parent/guardian wants to review a student assessment, a parent-teacher conference may be requested, or the assessment may be available in the office for viewing. No pictures or copying of the assessments will be allowed.
- Students are expected to complete independent assignments on their own.

- Students are expected to complete group projects by individually contributing to the task.
- Students are expected to submit their own writing – plagiarism is not acceptable.
- Students will follow the “Technology Acceptable Use Policy and Procedures” when using technology for classwork, homework, and group projects.
- Students are expected to access only their own documents housed in Google classroom and to not tamper with any other student’s work.
- All work should reflect the student’s best effort and academic honesty.

Missing Work

- Upon any absence (excused or unexcused), the parent/guardian and/or student is responsible to request any missing assignments upon the return to school from the classroom teacher, as to minimize the amount of “incompletes” or zeros recorded for missing student work.
- The student has the same number of days absent to complete the assignments missed (1 day absent=1 day to complete the tasks; 2 days absent=2 days to complete the assignments).
- If a student is suspended, *“The teacher of any class from which a pupil is suspended may require the suspended pupil to complete any assignments and tests missed during the suspension.”* (Ed Code 48913)
- Missing assignments must be submitted to the classroom teacher.