



## Tips and Techniques

### What to do About Missing Assignments

**Scripture Verse:** *For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).*

**Grades:** 5-12

**Overview:** Getting assignment in on time is an issue that needs to be addressed before it becomes a habit. Although teachers would like to have “Thou shall not be late, ever” as part of the Ten Commandments, this phrase is nowhere to be found in the Bible. Just about every educator has heard some excuse as to why a student did not turn in their homework. Some of these are very plausible to very humorous, such as “my dog ate my assignment.”

#### The Importance of a Routine

The important thought to communicate to students is the importance of establishing a routine that allows for the unexpected and the importance of establishing a good name among the students and teachers (([Ecclesiastes 7:1](#))). I have found that those students who begin homework as soon as possible, are more likely to get their assignments in on time (see Study/Homework Routine). I have also observed that the more grace teachers give students, the more likely her students are to turn in homework late. Furthermore, it is not fair for some students to be required to have work in on time, while others do not have to turn work in one time.

All of us have been late at some point in time. When this happens we need to have grace and mercy. The same is true for students and their assignments. Knowing this, some teachers use a “Get out of homework” card much like the Monopoly “Get out of jail free” card. Students are given one to three cards for each grading period and reminded to choose wisely when to use the card.

I have also heard of teachers who have students take an oath at the beginning of the school terms, making a commitment to get their homework in on time. Adhering to this oath contributes to a good reputation and communicates to others trustworthy and dependability.

Students in high school need to understand that being late to work or on assignments is not acceptable in the business world. The classroom must prepare students for the life in the outside world. If you are having a challenge in getting students to turn in homework on time, you might wish to consider the following measures: (Keep in mind that for some student’s lateness is already a habit.)

#### Techniques to Reduce Late Assignments

The following items are adapted from *Classroom Discipline and Control: 101 Practical Techniques* by Fred B Chernow, 1981.)

1. Institute as your policy “Homework that is late will be graded and ten points will be taken off each day it is late.”
2. A formal letter to the teacher must accompany every late assignment explaining the reason for lateness.
3. Offenders will report to their teacher prior to going to lunch and therefore may be late for one of their favorite activities.
4. Late assignments will be returned later than assignments handed in on time.

5. After school sessions will be held for the pupil and teacher to discuss possible reasons for the pupil's behavior.

Students who habitually have missed homework should be required to complete an Assignment Analysis Sheet. Using this format will cause the students to think about themselves and challenge them toward self-improvement. Students need to know why he is doing something, or not doing something. The Assignment Analysis Sheet filled out completely, neatly, and with no erasures or crossing out (failure to meet these standards will require a rewrite).

The Assignment Analysis Sheet would include answer to the following questions:

- Was there anything you did not understand about this assignment?
- Did you have trouble getting the necessary books or materials?
- How could this assignment be changed to make it more interesting?
- What did you do instead of doing this assignment? (And, what was your spirit saying?)
- What must you do to change your attitude about school work?
- When will you be able to make this assignment up?

At Victory Christian school we required all "Failing" assignments that will be counted toward the student's grade to be signed by the parent and returned the next day. This is to keep the parents informed as to the child's need to improve his classroom performance, and it will avoid parents' being surprised when the student comes home with a "Failing" grade. Students who fail to return the signed paper would be violating the classroom code for being responsible. It is necessary that each teacher is consistent in this area. For those children who have a pattern of "Failing" work, it would be a good idea to send home some "passing" papers for signature so that the positive self-image of the child can be strengthened. The goal is for students to master the content. Therefore, students should be given an opportunity to make up failing work, since a failing grade indicates that the work was not mastered.

## Tracking Assignments

Create a system in your gradebook to track late assignments. For example, you can denote papers being returned by circling the letter grade in your grade book when the paper is returned. "F" papers should be corrected and a positive point system used to gain points so that a child is not let off the hook by not making corrections (See Positive Point System).

Add "Please sign and return," at the bottom of papers sent home. (Some teachers have invested in a personal stamp for this purpose.) If paper is not returned, call parent. Do not let this go by one day. If you fail to follow up on papers not being returned, it will grow into a bigger issue as the year passes. With the use of emails, it is very easy to keep parents informed of late assignments.

## Notification to Parents

Another strategy is to send home a Completion of Homework Assignment form to the parent. Using school letterhead or a "themed" email, teachers can communicate to parents a number of actions concerning completion of homework. See the following example.

[Send on School Letterhead]

TO: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

FROM: \_\_\_\_\_

**COMPLETION OF HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS**

Believing that homework is an integral part of the school program, each teacher is at liberty to give homework to aid the students to advance in their studies. Therefore, each student is required to complete the homework assignments on time. We do request parent's full cooperation in seeing that the assignments are completed. Repeated delinquent homework could result in further consequences.

I would like to bring the following to your attention concerning \_\_\_\_\_.

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | Homework assignments are being completed on time and the quality is acceptable.   |
|  | Homework assignments are not being completed on time.   |
|  | Your child is being asked to stay in from recess and/or after school in order to make up homework.                              |
|  | Your child will not be permitted to attend classes where homework has not been completed.                                       |
|  | Unless there is improvement in completion of homework assignments, your child will be referred to the principal for suspension. |
|  | A conference is requested in order to deal with delinquent homework.  |
|  | There has been no significant improvement in completion of assignments.   |
|  | Your child is being referred to the principal for suspension.   |
|  | Your child is being referred to the principal for transfer out of this class.   |

Please sign and return to me via your child.

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

