



Reading Comprehension Worksheet

Grade 8

Answer Key

Should Students Help Design Their Own Homework Policy?

Every fall, students return to school and receive a homework policy they had no part in creating. Teachers and administrators set the rules: how much, how often, and how it's graded, while the students actually doing the work are rarely asked for input. This needs to change. Schools that involve students directly in shaping homework policy see better results, not despite student input, but because of it.

Consider the difference between a rule handed down from above and one built with the people who have to follow it. When students help set reasonable expectations, such as a cap on nightly homework time or clearer guidelines for what counts as busywork versus meaningful practice, they tend to take that policy more seriously. Several middle schools that have experimented with student advisory committees on homework policy report higher completion rates and, notably, fewer complaints from families about excessive workloads.

Critics of this idea argue that students lack the experience to make sound decisions about their own education, and that involving them risks lowering academic standards simply to make schoolwork more comfortable. This concern deserves a real response rather than dismissal. Giving students a voice does not mean giving them total control. A well-designed advisory committee still includes teachers and administrators, who bring professional expertise and keep academic rigor intact, while students contribute the one perspective adults in a building often cannot fully replicate: what it actually feels like to be assigned five hours of homework in a single week.

The goal is not to eliminate homework or make school easier. It is to design homework policy that works better, because the people it affects most were part of building it. Schools already ask students to give feedback on cafeteria food and extracurricular

activities. Homework, which occupies far more of a student's time and attention, deserves at least that same level of consideration.

Circle the Correct Answer

1. What is the author's central claim in this essay?

Answer: b) Students should help shape homework policy alongside teachers and administrators

2. What evidence does the author use to support the claim?

Answer: b) Reports of higher completion rates and fewer complaints from schools with student advisory committees

3. What counterclaim does the author acknowledge?

Answer: b) That students lack the experience to make sound decisions and involving them could lower academic standards

4. How does the author respond to that counterclaim?

Answer: b) By arguing that teachers and administrators still remain involved, preserving academic rigor

True or False

5. The author argues homework should be completely eliminated.

Answer: False

6. The author compares homework feedback to existing feedback schools already collect, like on cafeteria food.

Answer: True

7. The author ignores the counterclaim rather than responding to it.

Answer: False

Fill in the Blank

8. The author says giving students a voice does not mean giving them total _____.

Answer: control

9. The essay argues homework occupies far more of a student's time than cafeteria food or _____ activities.

Answer: extracurricular

Think and Explain

10. Identify the counterclaim in this essay and explain how effectively the author addresses it. Is the author's response convincing? Why or why not?

Sample answer: Accept reasonable answers identifying the counterclaim about students lacking experience and potentially lowering academic standards, and offering a reasoned evaluation of the author's response, for example noting that keeping teachers and administrators involved directly addresses the standards concern, which strengthens the argument, or noting that the response could be more convincing with more specific evidence.

11. What tone does the author use throughout this essay (for example, reasonable, urgent, dismissive of opposing views), and how does that tone affect the essay's persuasiveness? Support your answer with specific details from the text.

Sample answer: Accept reasonable answers identifying a reasonable, measured tone, supported by details such as directly acknowledging and responding to the counterclaim rather than dismissing it, and explaining that this tone likely makes the argument more persuasive to a skeptical reader than a more one-sided or dismissive tone would.