



## DEALING WITH LES DEVOIRS

### How to deal with “les devoirs” when you don’t speak French

Helping your children with their homework is a challenge for any parent. Helping with their homework, or “les devoirs”, in a language you don’t speak is an altogether different challenge. But it isn’t impossible; we have gathered some invaluable homework tips for you from experienced parents.

**HOMEWORK:** Reviewing and practicing concepts and skills taught at school. Helping your child keep up with curriculum pace, develop study skills, and review oral material.

#### REASONS FOR HOMEWORK

- Homework is an important step in building a strong home/school partnership
- Parental involvement is crucial to achievement and to a positive attitude for learning
- Homework is a planned part of the Ministry of Education’s education process
- The education process is designed to enhance student learning by establishing important skills your children will carry with them as they grow: responsibility, organization, concentration, time management, self-discipline

#### HOMEWORK IN FRENCH

- Buy a French/English dictionary and have your child refer to the dictionary’s phonetic spelling when he/she has difficulty remembering particular words. Refer to our Online French Resources and French Apps tip sheets
- Use picture clues. Ask your child to point to words being read so you can “learn to read French”
- Have your child explain interesting language differences (e.g. “things are often backwards in French...In English it is a blue table but in French it is une table bleu which is really like saying a table blue!”)
- Your child can sing songs or recite poems while pointing to corresponding words on the song/poem sheet. Ask your child to explain what it is about; find words which are repeated more than once in the text; find words that rhyme. Ask your child to clap out the number of syllables in particular words, etc.
- Communicate with parents with children in French programs to exchange ideas. Encourage your child to share contact information with friends from class to connect as “homework buddies”

#### HOMEWORK LOCATION

It is a good idea to establish an appropriate location for homework tasks. An ideal place is one:

- Close to a parent and distraction-free (siblings, TV)
- With an appropriate height table and chair and good lighting
- That has required supplies and review/reference materials at hand



#### ASSISTING WITH HOMEWORK (in general)

- Support and encourage your child - you are not expected to teach. Don’t do the work for your child
- Check agenda daily for homework information. Create a “homework calendar” to keep track of due dates/ tests and post it at the designated homework location
- Initially supervise very closely, then gradually encourage more independence - progress will vary with each child (Note: It usually takes one to three months for homework routines to become a habit)