

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)