

Late Assignments: A General Class Problem

Assignments Handed In Late

Late Work

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(*The Solution Book*, Solution Sheets, Section 1)

See also

Not Completing Assignments: A Minor Problem 4

Description of the Problem	Cause
Each student in room 14 is supposed to hand in all daily assignments by the end of each day. Approximately half of the class gets all its work in on time. The other students are one or more days late handing in their work. Periodically, the teacher has to allow a day for students to catch up on their assignments. By the next day, some students are already behind again.	The most common reason for students turning in their assignments late is that they are not held accountable for getting work in on time. If there is no consequence for turning one's work in late, there really isn't any compelling reason for getting work in on time. Other contributing factors may be the timeliness with which work is returned to the students and the type of feedback students receive regarding their work. If the students do not get assignments back with corrections and feedback from the teacher, or if they don't get assignments back for several days at a time, they may assume that it makes no difference when they turn in their work. In fact, they may feel that it makes no difference if it's handed in at all.

The Goal All students will hand in their papers on time.

The Plan

- Step 1 Make sure students have enough time to complete their assignments.** Make sure that assignments are at an appropriate instructional level.
- Step 2 Let students know when daily assignments are due.** When possible, have students hand in work right before you are ready to correct it. In most classrooms, this will be right before students go home. It will also help students if you pace them throughout the day. For example, you might have them try to complete their reading assignments before lunch, their math assignments before afternoon recess, and so on.
- Step 3 Schedule a 15- to 20-minute work-completion or free-time period just before all daily work is due.** This will generally be at the end of the day. This period serves a dual purpose. It allows students to complete unfinished work, and it also allows those who have finished their work to take part in a fun activity.

Turn the page.

The Plan (continued)

Step 4 Establish a consequence for students who turn in unfinished work. Some students may turn in unfinished work so that they can take advantage of a free-time period. The best consequence for this problem is to have the students complete the work at the beginning of the next day's work-completion or free-time period. This serves as a logical consequence. The student loses free time because he or she has turned in incomplete work to take advantage of a free-time period.

Step 5 Establish a consequence for students who do not complete work by the end of the work-completion or free-time period. If you use grades, one consequence could be to reduce the student's grade. An easy formula to follow is to lower the paper's value one grade for each day it is late.

Another option is to have students stay after school until work is completed. Make sure that you have parental permission if you keep a student after school. If it is not possible for a student to stay after school, you may wish to have the student complete the work at home that evening.

Step 6 Correct students' work and return it immediately. Your students will learn a lot about getting things done if they see how promptly you complete your work. If, however, they often see you fall behind in correcting papers, they will be more likely to turn their work in late. Provide a good model and stay on top of grading papers.