The Great Controversy About The Homework

Imagine this. You are coming home from a long school day just wanting to relax, maybe take a long nap because you are tired from staying up late doing homework. But then you remember the mounds of homework that you have been assigned. Then, the realization hits, you won't be able to relax at all tonight because you have at least two to three hours of homework. On this day, just as every day previous to it, and every day that will come, you have been assigned homework in every class that will take you all night to complete. Recently, there have been more and more schools that are banning homework across the world because the effectiveness of it is questionable. Does it actually help us? According to a study conducted by Indiana University, homework doesn't even help course grades. Isn't that the purpose of homework? So if homework isn't serving its purpose, what is the purpose of us doing it? Four main reasons that we shouldn't have homework are that it doesn't help us, it puts us under high levels of stress, it's bad for our health, and lastly, there is less time for us to do the things that make us happy.

Furthermore, the first reason that we shouldn't have homework is that it doesn't help us. Oxford Learning says, "After a full day of learning in class, students can become burnt out if they have too much homework. When this happens, the child may stop completing homework or rely on a parent to assist with homework. As a result, the benefits of homework are lost and grades can start to slip," the point of homework is to make sure we understand the topic that we learned in class which is among the many benefits, and it says the benefits of homework are lost, so if the benefits are lost after us sitting in class all day, then why do it. Which comes to the fact that a Woodland Middle schoolers school day is approximately six hours and forty minutes long, and they sit and learn for around five hours and forty-five minutes. They become exhausted after that and you want them to go home and sit for another three hours completing the tasks that you give them. All you are doing is making us not want to do our work. In the infographic on Oxford Learning it also says that, "40% of high school students are chronically disengaged from school," a main cause of them being disengaged is that they are either sleep deprived, from having to stay up late doing homework, or as previously mentioned, they're burnt out, they're done [Oxford]. The leading reason that homework should not be required is that it hasn't been shown to help students, defeating the purpose of it.

The next reason that we shouldn't have homework is that it puts us under high levels of stress. According to a survey that was conducted within my class, out of nine people, seven said that either all, or almost all of their stress is caused by the homework that our teachers give, one said none, and the other said 20%. The amount of people that said a lot of their stress was caused by homework is extremely significant, so it only seems to be right that you get rid of homework because it is so stressful. According to Everyday Health, stress is a big cause and trigger of depression and mental illness in general [Ileades]. Forty seven per cent of males ages twelve to seventeen and a whopping sixty five per cent of females of the same age have depression, says Newport Academy [Newport]. These percentages have risen sixty three per cent as an average of both genders, which although there are many causes, don't you think the reason that students get so much homework is a cause of that number rising so frighteningly much? Stanford did a survey among teenage students and they found that fifty six per cent of the students considered homework a primary stressor, and less than one per cent said that

homework didn’t stress them out. Yet again, a very significant amount [Parker]. In Finland they have a shorter school day than students at Woodland, yet they still have no homework. This isn’t suggesting that we should shorten the school day, it is just showing that it can all be accomplished in a day. Finland is also considered the happiest country in the world [Broom]. Don’t you think that a leading cause of this could be that the kids have no homework ever? Just in our school, there could be a big drop in kids that have extreme stress if we just dropped homework. We could be happier, then there would be fewer people with depression in our school. Isn’t that important? Therefore, another main reason we should not have to do homework is because it causes a lot of stress.

A following reason that we should not be required to do homework is that it is harmful to adolescents and teens health. In the same study by Stanford it said, “In their open-ended answers, many students said their homework load led to sleep deprivation and other health problems,” [Parker]. Sleep deprivation can lead to many serious problems in the long run such as severe headaches, memory problems, trouble concentrating, weakened immune system, high blood pressure, risk for diabetes, weight gain, risk of heart disease and trouble balancing. You want students to be able to remember what they learn, but if they don’t get enough sleep then it could lead to memory loss, obviously students should be able to concentrate, but if they physically can’t, then their grades could drop and they would suffer more. If students also have weakened immune systems, schools are naturally full of germs and then more students would get sick and miss school and then they could miss a lot of learning and not be able to control it because of having a weakened immune system. Being sleep deprived can also lead to weight gain and obesity, and as you know, obesity is a big problem in the United States, shouldn’t people try to get rid of that problem? The effects that homework has on a young person's physical health are startling and should not be overlooked. You need to be healthy to thrive and since homework leads to health issues it should only make sense to get rid of it [Watson]. Henceforth, another main cause that we should get rid of homework is that it is harmful to students' health.

The final reason that we shouldn’t have homework is that it gives teens less, if any time to do the things that they enjoy. Stanford also found that the students they surveyed said that they had less time to spend time with the people they care about such as friends and family, and stopped doing the hobbies and activities that they enjoy doing [Parker]. Believe it or not, hobbies are extremely important for both your physical and mental health, whether it be a sport which helps you exercise, or painting which relieves stress, both are vital for success and being healthy in general. According to Kettering University, “Physical hobbies have clear physiological benefits because they increase both your heart rate and brain function,” and, “Carving out time for activities you enjoy is an easy way to improve your mental health and overall emotional well-being. Hobbies decrease stress by relaxing you and taking your mind off the more pressing concerns of daily life,” and, “hobbies can give us a sense of mastery and control. Our esteem level tends to rise as we feel ever more accomplished at a particular task… associated with improved mental health and depression reduction,” [Kettering]. As earlier mentioned, stress levels from homework cause depression, so if you eliminate homework, then teens can have time to partake in the hobbies and activities that they take pleasure in, therefore reducing depression. It’s pretty obvious that being around the people we care for and spending time with them makes us happier and less stressed. And, “There’s a growing body of evidence that suggest our brains actually function better when we’re interacting with others and experiencing togetherness,” according to NBC News, which shows that teens can even be more concentrated when they are in school if they have time to interact with their family and friends

[DiGiulio]. Hence, the final main reason that we shouldn’t be required to do homework is the fact that we have less time to participate in the things that we enjoy and be around family and friends.

Some people think that students should still have to do homework because it can be beneficial to our understanding of the topic that we learned that day. And although this can be true at times, studies have found that this is actually false, “...when middle school students were assigned more than an hour and a half of homework, their math and science test scores went down.” according to apa.org [Fernández-Alonso]. Which creates the big question of homework and the usefulness of it. It is understandable that educators want students to understand what they are learning so that they don’t struggle, but all they are creating is struggling, whether the struggling be physical or mental. In my math class, we always go over the homework which is around ten to fifteen minutes and then only spend the same amount of time on the lesson. Now granted, my math teacher always makes sure to give us time to work on the homework, but if she just gave us problems that we could finish in class and turn in, then we would have even more time to work on the worksheet at the end, because we didn’t spend ten to fifteen minutes at the beginning going over the nights homework. This escalating homework issue is solvable.

Overall, homework is hurting students all over the nation therefore only suggesting the solution that it is eliminated. The purpose of it is to raise course grades and to help students understand the topic, which is not what is happening. Teachers need to understand that students are still curious and they don’t want to spend three extra hours outside of school sitting and doing homework. They can actually learn a lot outside of school. It is as if teachers don’t care that their students want to do other things. This isn’t necessarily the teachers at Woodland, but just teachers in general. In the words of Alfie Kohn, homework is 'the greatest single extinguisher of children's curiosity that we have yet invented.' [Capek] furthermore proving that homework is burdensome for us and we shouldn’t be required to do it. What is happening is that homework actually isn’t helping students, it is harming the physical and mental health of the students that are doing it, causes a lot of stress in adolescents and teens, and students have less time to do the things that they want, causing them to not want to go to school, showing that homework should not be required in schools all over the nation.