

So Much Homework, and So Little Time

- Shanna Smith

It is past midnight and you still have an hour of homework left. You spent your afternoon at sports practice or a school club, and you could not start your homework until after dinner. Is it really worth it to finish your homework and ultimately get less than five hours of sleep?

Almost every high school student has been in this situation, excluding those who do not procrastinate or do not participate in extracurricular activities. As the school year progresses and classes become tougher, many students are often forced to choose: homework or sleep? While it is tempting to give up and choose to go to bed, many ambitious students tend to choose the former. And this makes me wonder if the more obedient option is always worth it.

Workload for high school students is heavy, especially during Junior year. It's truly a struggle to get everything done, and get the recommended amount of sleep for a teenager. Often it seems like the only reasonable option is to leave sleep for the weekends, and instead stay up to all hours of the night studying, and doing homework for all sorts of classes. But is this lack of sleep really worth it?

The answer is no. While we sleep, our body stores memories. When an adolescent gets less than eight hours of sleep, his or her brain does not fully store these memories. This means that studying for a test in the wee hours of the night may not help improve one's test score as much as desired, in fact it may be detrimental. Also, when someone is extremely tired during a test, he or she tends to be less aware and make more careless mistakes. The tradeoff between not sleeping and studying more is simply not worth it.

homework and studying as possible over the weekend. This is surprisingly difficult for most people, myself included, who often resort to procrastination. However, if you participate in extracurricular activities and do not have much time after school, completing some homework assignments over the weekend can come as a huge help and reduce loads of stress.

Another option for the procrastinators out there is to finish homework in increments. For example, after taking notes for thirty minutes, allow yourself a minute or two to check Facebook, or whatever else distracts you. This works because many people do not have the concentration to do homework for hours at a time; therefore they often result to finding larger distractions.

If you still find yourself up past midnight doing homework even with these methods, there are still other ways to improve test performance with minimal sleep. One way is to eat a good breakfast. This helps more than you know; not only is it healthy to eat a protein-filled breakfast from three food groups, but it also makes you more alert during the day. Both your day at school and your test grade will be better when you have a healthy breakfast. Another way to improve

test performance is to study a few days in advance. That way, you can remember more of the material, and don't have to spend as much time cramming the night before.

So the next time you are up until 1 am and you cannot decide between completing homework or getting enough sleep, make sure you take into account what you have to lose. Sometimes it is better to simply call it a night. But we all have to accept that that is how life works. It's always best to roll with the punches, and make do with what limited time we do have.

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