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# Do Students Have Too Much Homework?

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Part

II

# DO STUDENTS HAVE TOO MUCH HOMEWORK?



## AN ERRONEOUS VIEW FROM THE POPULAR PRESS

Children really are striving to improve. Some have learning gaps up to 80 percent of their starting to Sylvia officials. Others struggle a difficult period, such as chronic. And still others just in comparison to their academic like a bright 14-year-old New boy who was flourishing in several earlier and his to be tracked after an elaborate academic tests that he had just never a multiplication tables. Four 11,000 later, she believes the well on its way to solution. She says she has asked herself, "Could parent would. How do I working, and if it isn't, would I be a new experience?" But in her eyes that what worked 2,500 of hold true, in Manhattan or in Cali. It was those Dorothy third public school teacher (see Sylvia), helped Antonio Miller exercise at Longfellow Elementary. Antonio was chosen for the job because, as a third grader, he could recognize all the handwriting. Under the supervision of Chicago's Office she put him through the lesson, great performance, then sent him to maintain of the school day.

# Homework Doesn't Help

Every night, millions of parents and kids shed blood, sweat and tears over the kitchen table. Now some researchers say these dreaded lessons are generally pointless until middle school. By SHANON BEELEY

There are so many reasons about why so many of America's children need remedial tutoring as they are falling students. But more and more education researchers are drawing lessons from kids like Adam, whose long and hard with homework began in the first grade. His school, outside Chicago, assigned just a little in the beginning—maybe 15 minutes a night, plus reading. Now, in fourth grade, his load has exploded to three hours a night, and Adam, identified as a gifted student, "is

I suspect it's because he is voluntary. There was hand, sweat and a good tears as he sat at his desk, across America, scoring the stories of a long after watching him sweating at post-homework. Sure, some students pick up on their perfectly regular assignment just do not look cheerfully and finished with time to spare for reading, television or play. We just don't know any. Something that infuriates parents, who takes family time and sends out to much else in a child's life might be tolerable if it



AN ERRONEOUS VIEW FROM  
THE POPULAR PRESS

body

# Overbooked

Root causes of homework for a third grader? Educators were just covering their own



It's a common sight: a young boy sitting at his desk in a classroom, looking thoughtful or perhaps a bit frustrated. He's surrounded by other students, some of whom are also looking towards the camera. The scene is a typical classroom setting, with desks and papers visible. The boy's expression is the focal point of the image, suggesting a story about the pressures of schoolwork.

But the real question is: why? Is it the volume of homework that has increased over the years? Or is it the quality of the assignments that has changed? Educators and parents often find themselves in a tug-of-war over the amount and type of homework assigned to their children. This article explores the underlying reasons for this phenomenon.

The answer might be more complex than we think. It could be a combination of factors, including changes in curriculum standards, increased expectations from parents, and the need for students to prepare for standardized tests. Understanding these root causes is the first step towards finding a solution that works for everyone.

Courtesy of People Magazine

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AN ERRONEOUS VIEW FROM THE POPULAR PRESS



**Weekly Time Spent on Activities by Age**  
(hours:minutes)

**Table**  
**2-1**

	Age 3-5		Age 6-8			Age 9-12			All Ages			
	1981 (N=61)	1997 (N=665)	1981 (N=60)	1997 (N=602)		1981 (N=101)	1997 (N=851)		1981 (N=222)	1997 (N=2119)		
Sleeping	77:19	76:11	70:04	70:49		65:36	67:24	**	70:01	71:07	*	
School	14:30	12:05	27:52	32:46	**	29:02	34:03	***	24:45	26:48	**	
Television	15:14	13:52	15:55	12:54	*	20:01	13:36	***	17:35	13:29	***	
Playing	25:50	17:21	***	14:58	11:10	**	7:24	8:54	*	14:30	12:12	***
Eating	9:43	9:24		9:08	8:05	**	8:13	7:23	**	8:52	8:13	***
Personal Care	6:18	8:32	***	6:13	7:53	***	6:21	7:53	***	6:18	8:05	***
Sports	1:31	4:08	***	6:01	5:13		4:51	6:33	**	4:15	5:25	
Daycare	0:10	7:30		0:12	1:33	***	0:18	0:24		0:14	2:57	***
Shopping	2:35	3:44	*	0:59	2:38	***	1:57	2:24		1:52	2:53	
Visiting	2:58	3:04		3:40	2:48		3:48	2:40	**	3:32	2:50	**
Household Work	2:09	2:20		2:49	2:07		5:18	3:42	***	3:46	2:49	***
Studying	0:25	0:36		0:52	2:08	***	3:22	3:41		1:53	2:16	*
Other Passive Leisure	2:59	2:35		1:58	1:33		3:24	2:19	*	2:53	2:11	***

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ , for 1981-1997 changes

Source: Data resorted from Table 2, Sandra J. Hofferth and John F. Sandberg, "Changes in America's Children's Time, 1981-1997" (Report No. 00-456), Population Studies Center at the Institute for Social Research, (University of Michigan 2000).

## Fewer children were doing homework in 1997 than in 1981.

Fig

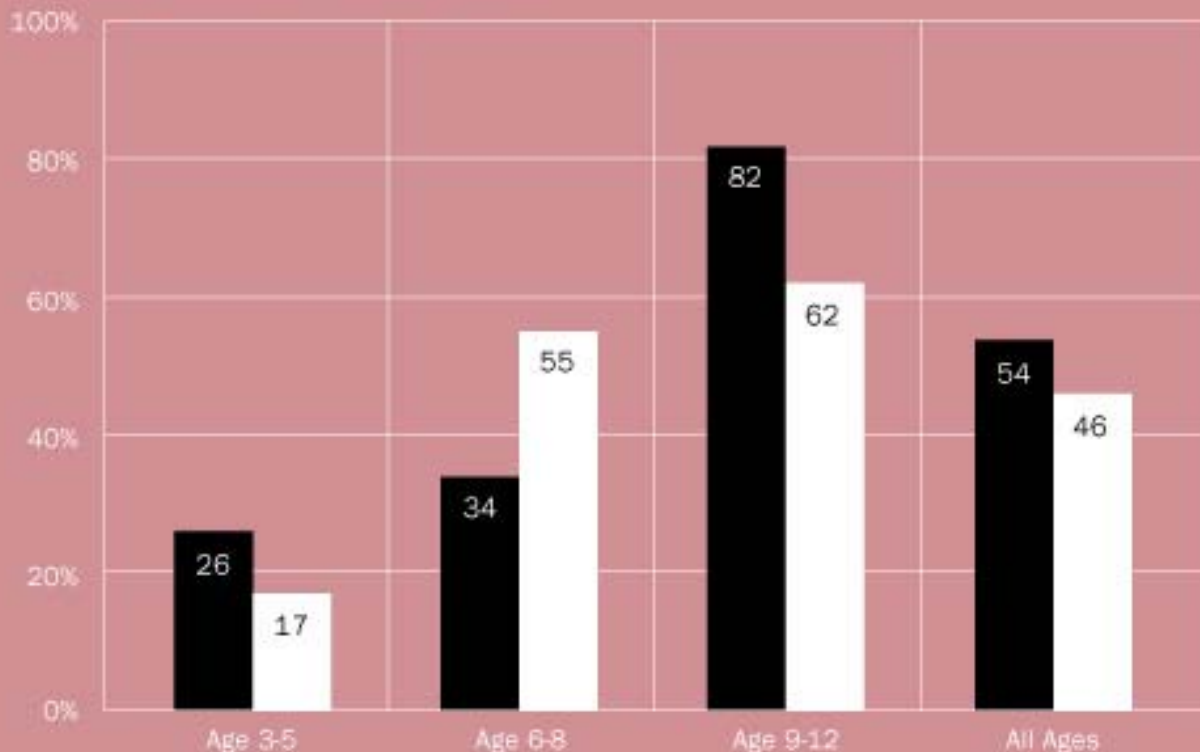
2-1

**The only exception is children aged 6-8, two-thirds of whom did no homework at all in 1981.**

Source: Sandra J. Hofferth and John F. Sandberg, "Changes in America's Children's Time, 1981-1997" (Report No. 00-456), Population Studies Center at the Institute for Social Research, (University of Michigan 2000), Table 1.

■ 1981  
□ 1997

Percentage of children who study—at all



**Students Were Asked:  
How much time did you spend on homework yesterday?  
(percentage of students)**

*Age 9*

	1988	1992	1999	2008
None Assigned	29	32	26	18
Did Not Do It	4	4	4	5
< 1 hr.	47	47	53	60
1-2 hrs.	13	12	12	12
> 2 hrs.	7	5	5	5

*Age 13*

	1980	1988	1992	1999	2008
None Assigned	30	17	21	24	23
Did Not Do It	6	4	4	5	7
< 1 hr.	32	37	36	37	43
1-2 hrs.	24	30	29	26	21
> 2 hrs.	7	11	10	8	6

*Age 17*

	1980	1988	1992	1999	2008
None Assigned	32	21	22	26	28
Did Not Do It	12	13	12	13	12
< 1 hr.	24	28	29	26	27
1-2 hrs.	23	26	25	23	22
> 2 hrs.	10	12	11	12	10

NOTE: Age 9 students were not surveyed on homework until 1984.

Source: NAEP 2008 Long-term Trend Reading Summary Data Tables for ages 9, 13, and 17 data.



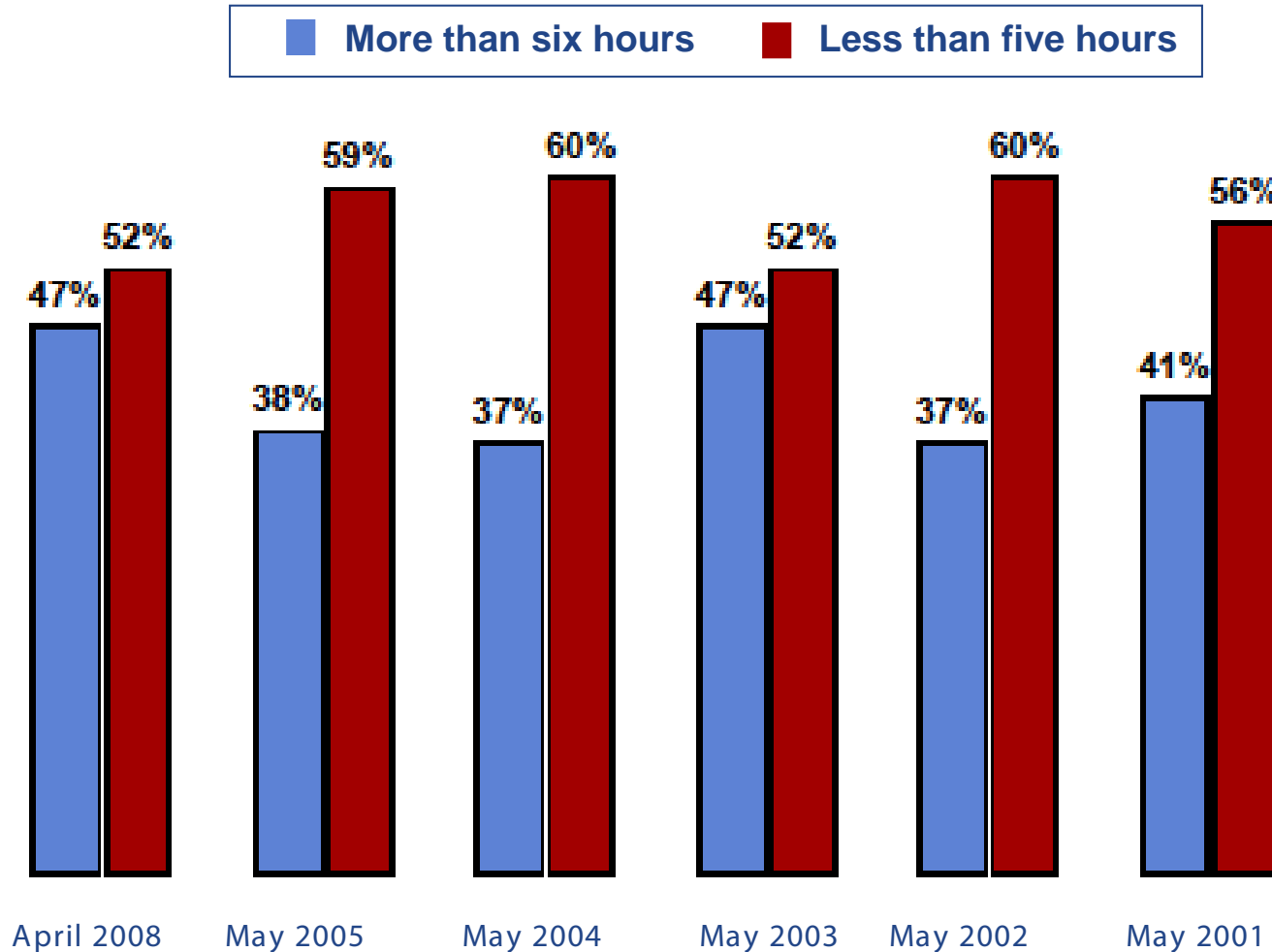
**Percentage of  
Students Reporting  
Less Than an Hour  
Of Daily Homework  
(NAEP,2008)**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Percent</b>
9 Year Olds	83%
13 Year Olds	73%
17 Year Olds	67%

Source: NAEP 2008 Long-term Trend  
Reading Summary Data Tables for ages 9, 13, and 17 data.

# Time Spent on Homework

*Hours per week spent doing homework*



# Is Homework A Priority?

	<b>High School Students</b>
	<u>%</u>
Statement A/homework is a priority	44
Statement B/never have the time for homework	49
Some of both (VOL)	6
Not sure	1

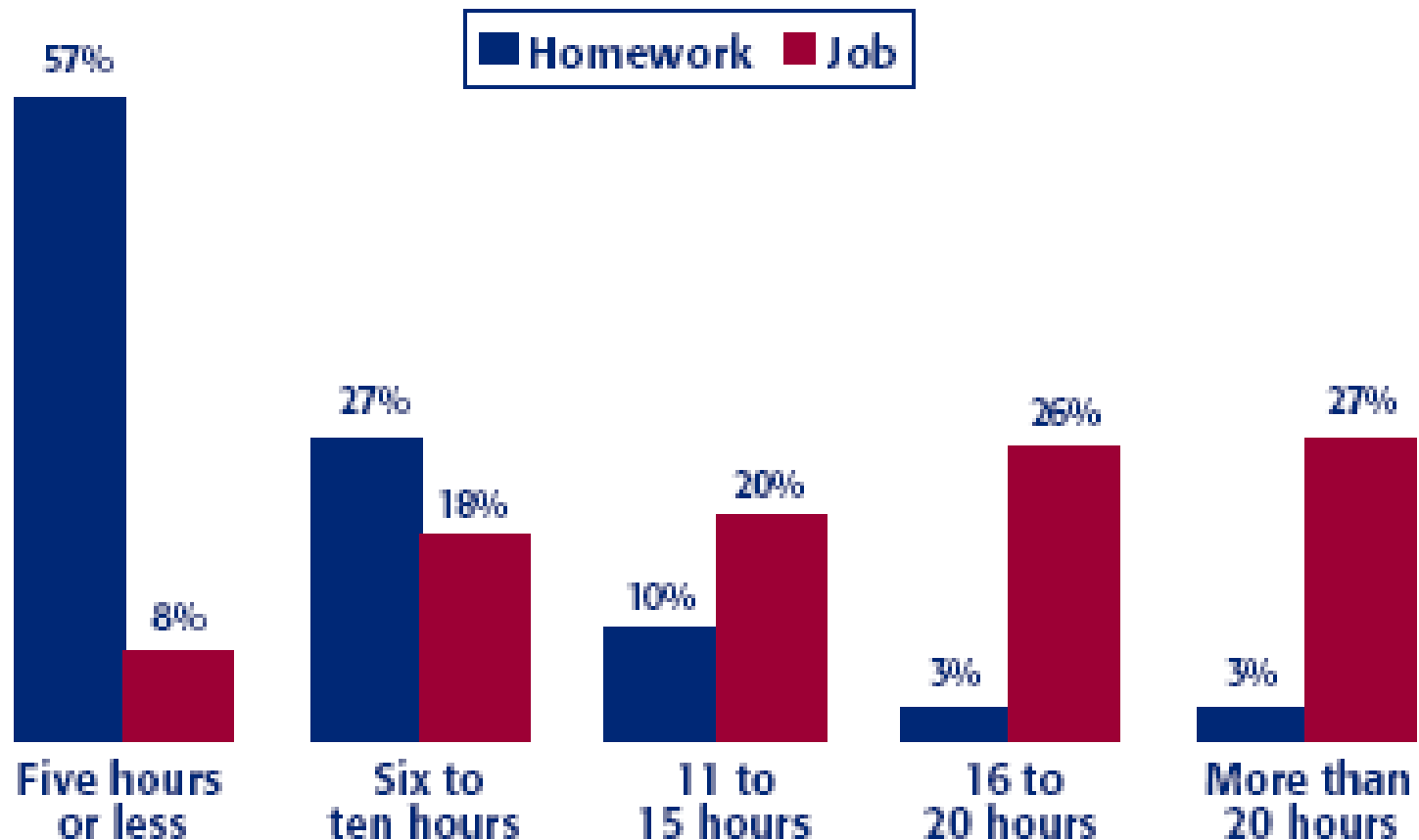
Please tell me which statement comes closer to your opinion about doing homework.

**Statement A:** Doing homework is a priority for me. I complete it before participating in other activities.

**Statement B:** I know I should do more homework, but I never seem to have the time.

# Hours Per Week Spent Doing Homework/Working At Job

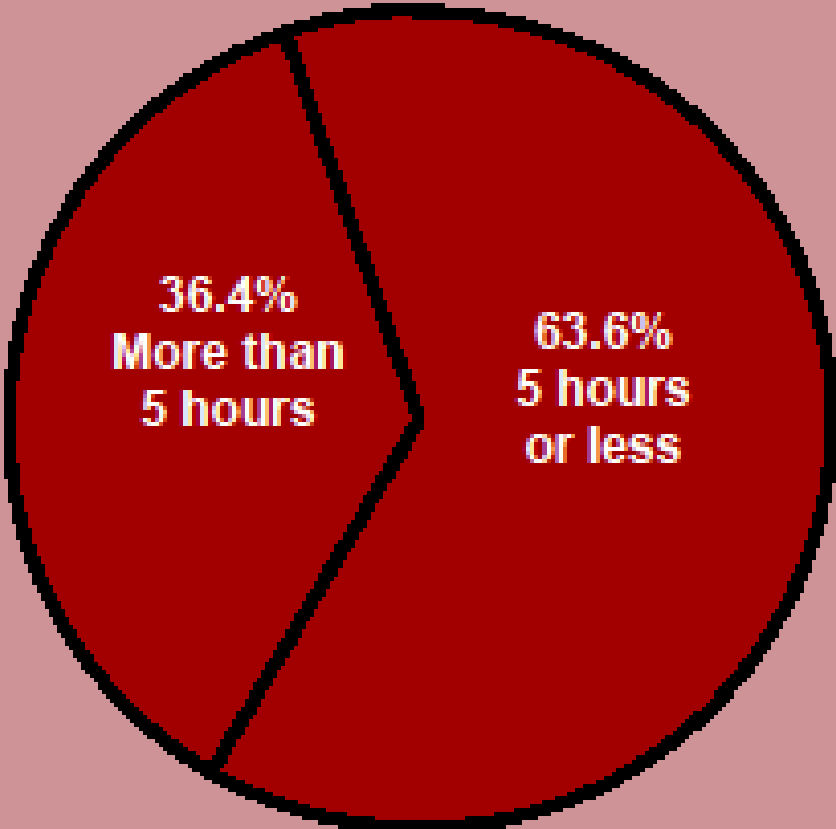
*(Among the 43% of students who have a job)*



Approximately 60% of college-bound seniors do five hours or less homework per week.

**College freshmen were asked:  
During your last year in high school, how many hours did you spend in a typical week studying or doing homework?**

Source: John H. Pryor, S. Hurtado, J. Sharkness, W.S. Korn, L. DeAngelo, L. Romero, and S. Tran “The American Freshman: National Norms for Fall 2008,” Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA, 2009.

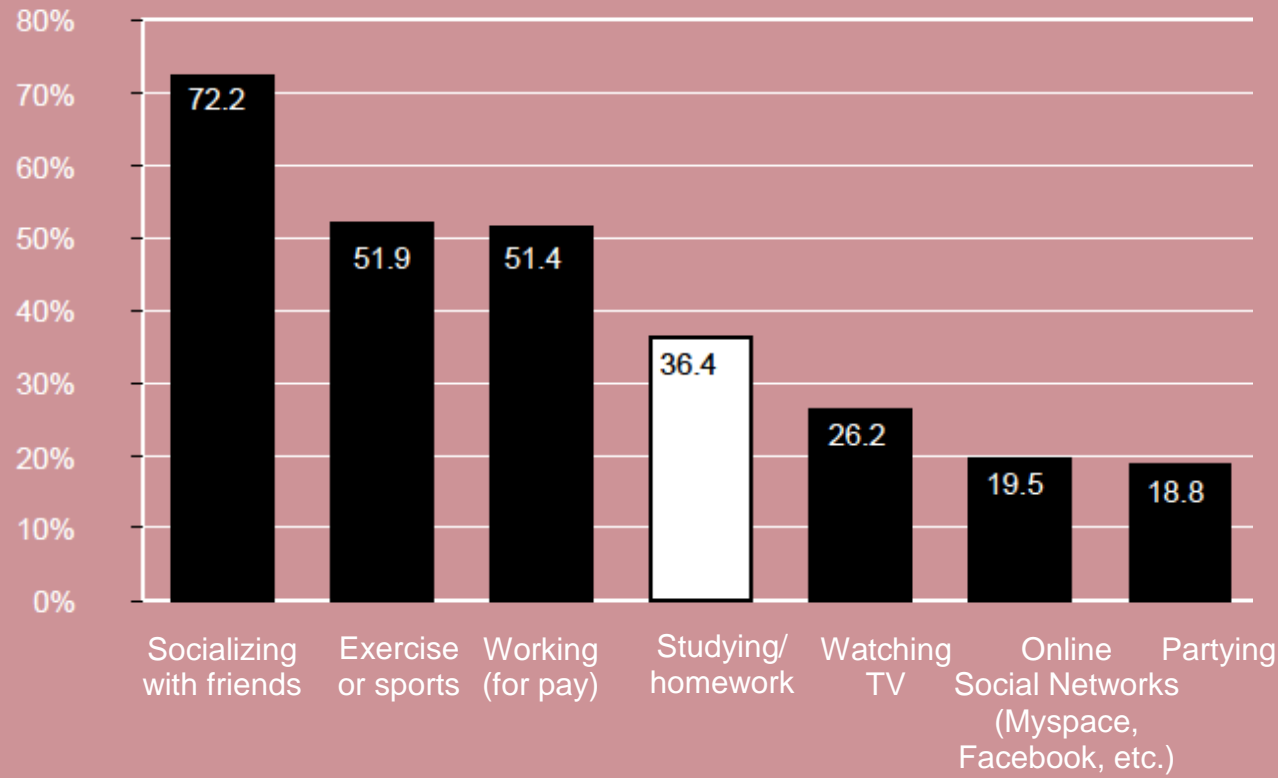


# Studying does not dominate the lives of high school seniors.

Students spending more than five hours per week on activities in their last year of high school (percentage)

**Socializing, working, and sports command more time than studying.**

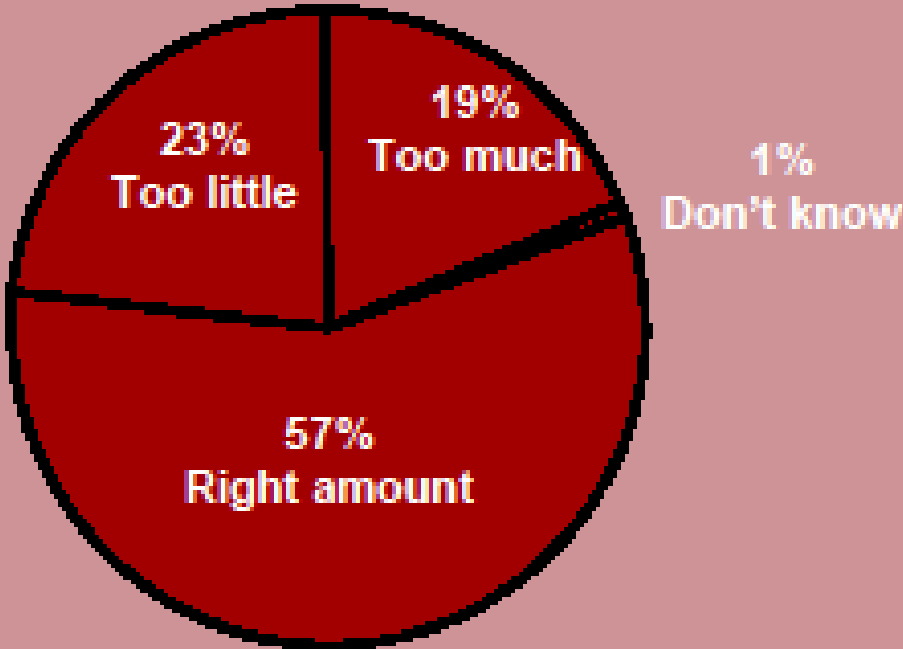
Source: John H. Pryor, S. Hurtado, J. Sharkness, W.S. Korn, L. DeAngelo, L. Romero, and S. Tran "The American Freshman: National Norms for Fall 2008," Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA, 2009.



# Parents are not concerned about too much homework.

Parents of students K-12 were asked what they thought about their children's homework load.

Source: AP Polls, "AP-AOL, Parents and Teachers Study," February 8, 2006.






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### Poll Results

**How much homework should you have to do?**

Homework should be illegal (40%)  


One hour a week is plenty (18%)  


A few hours a night, but nothing on the weekends (33%)  


I absolutely love homework—the more the better (8%)  


### OTHER POLLS

- [What is your favorite holiday?](#)
- [Are you going trick or treating this year?](#)
- [Do your teens have rips, tears and holes in them?](#)
- [Do you eat raw cookie dough?](#)
- [Do you hate it when the radio ruins good songs by playing them over and over?](#)
- [What is your favorite snack?](#)
- [What is your favorite shoe brand?](#)
- [What is your favorite store?](#)
- [Do you believe in ghosts?](#)
- [What is your favorite type of fruit pie?](#)
- [Are you afraid of heights?](#)
- [Do you still watch cartoons?](#)
- [Do you always smile for pictures?](#)
- [Do your teens have rips, tears or holes in them?](#)
- [Do you get 8 hours of sleep at night?](#)
- [What are you dreading right now?](#)
- [What is your favorite kind of cookie?](#)
- [What kind of programs would you like to go to at your library?](#)
- [What is your favorite cartoon?](#)
- [What is your favorite flavor of ramen noodles?](#)
- [What is your favorite restaurant?](#)



# Conclusions

- The typical student, even in high school, does not spend more than an hour per day on homework
- The homework load has not changed much since the 1980s
- The students whose homework increased in the last decade are those who previously had no homework and now have a small amount
- Most parents feel the homework load is about right

# Recommendations

- Take anti-homework articles with a grain of salt
- Follow the PTA guidelines on homework
- Understand that homework varies
- If a homework problem exists, solutions should come from parents and teachers, not policy interventions