

Notes in English for Parents and Carers

WORKaBOOK

What are Workbooks?

Workbooks contain everything your child needs for homework at primary school, in one subject, for one school year.

Workbook homework is an extension of class work and is based on the National Curriculum. Workbook homework is based on three different types of homework activity: Learning, Practising, Thinking.

Learning exercises

These involve the things your child should learn this year. Some, like multiplication tables and word lists, need to be learned by heart. These pages are edged in blue (mathematics) or orange (English).

For the learning exercises, repetition is vital and you may like to test facts like multiplication tables on the way to and from school.

Practice exercises

Practice exercises are designed to consolidate learning. Find them on the pages edged in orange (mathematics) or purple (English). They are set at three different levels:

- Level A: to achieve basic competence;
- Level B: to meet and secure national expectations;
- Level C: to present some challenge.

This flexibility enables all children to achieve and make progress. The teacher will normally choose the level, but if your child also wants to try the next level up, encourage them to have a go!

Thinking tasks

The Thinking [and Writing] Tasks show how mathematics and English can be used and applied in everyday life. These are edged in green [mathematics] or red [English]. They make use of the skills developed in the learning and practice exercises.

Workbooks also include the following:

- a **mini dictionary** containing important vocabulary for the year. Children can use this to build up their own definitions during the year;
- **grey pages** for jottings or other special work;
- an **achievement** page encourages children to complete their Workbook;
- for English, a **reading record** page fosters an enthusiasm for reading;
- for mathematics, **reference** has additional information and supportive documents.

Getting started

Homework will normally be set every week. In class, your child will note down in their Workbook which tasks they have been asked to complete. As your child begins their homework, check that they know what to do. They should try to do the homework without your help, but you can offer support and assistance whenever they need it.

Make sure they have something to rest on and get them to work in pencil – so that it's easy to correct mistakes!

Most of the exercises can be done in one session though some of the Thinking Tasks may involve doing something over several days such as keeping a record of how long it takes to get to school.

Providing the right setting for homework is an important part of supporting your child. This includes:

Routine

Routine is important so try to find a regular time when your child is not too tired, for example, a weekend morning. It should be a time when you are around and able to give support if needed.

Distractions

Try to find a reasonably quiet place for your child to do homework. It should be somewhere that is well-lit and clear of clutter. Encourage others in the house not to distract your child while doing their homework!

Basic needs

Make sure your child isn't tired, hungry, thirsty, cold or irritated when they sit down to do their homework. These all get in the way of concentration and learning.

When your child has finished, you should sign the homework to show it has been done. Sign in the parent/carer comment box, then tick one of the boxes:

- **With help** if your child needed help;
- **Alone** if your child worked alone;
- **Confidently** if your child worked alone and did the work confidently.

There's also space for you to write a comment to the teacher - to share a difficulty or a special achievement, for example. Finally, make sure this book goes back to school on the right day.

How you can help – praise and encourage

As a parent/carer, you have tremendous power to strengthen your child's confidence – and confidence is vital to learning.

You can make a difference by encouraging your child to do the homework that has been set and then supporting them as they do it. You don't need to know all the answers – just showing them you are interested in their work is much more important!

If your child is unsure about the homework, read through the tasks with them and ask 'prompting' questions, such as:

- **Can you explain to me what you're doing?**
- **How are you going to do this?**
- **How do you know what to do?**
- **What do you need to find out?**

When you discuss homework in this way with your child, they take the role of the 'teacher' and explain to you what's expected. This in itself can be important.

Always be generous with support, praise and encouragement! Try to give specific praise that focuses on a particular aspect of their work, saying something like: 'I like the way you have...'; and always encourage your child to take a real pride in their work.

And if you're running short of time, help and support for homework can be given by any trusted person – it could be a brother, sister, grandparent or neighbour; it doesn't have to be the same person every time.

Finally...

Education is really a shared responsibility between home and school and homework can be the bridge that links these two areas of your child's life. Working in partnership with the school, you can make a real difference to your child's learning!