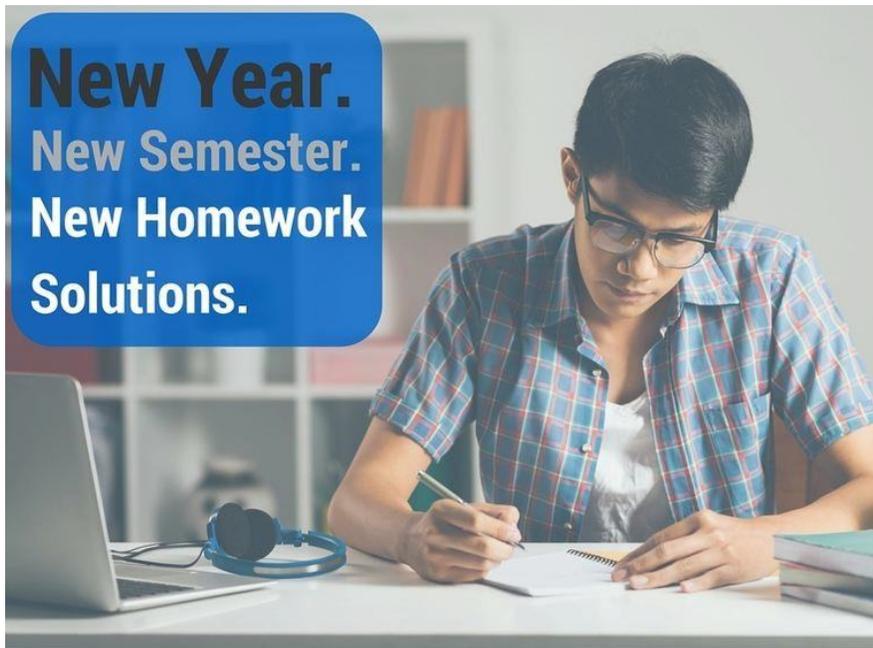


# New Year. New Semester. New Homework Solutions.

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**The start of a new year means it's the perfect time for a new outlook on homework:** homework systems! As a parent or a teacher, you know just how much of an energy drain (to put it lightly) homework can be for your students (and you)!



As students begin a new semester, this is the perfect time to establish some new routines to improve the process of doing homework. Pass these tips along to your student(s) and start this year off right...

**Let's start from the top.** The first question you need to ask yourself is, "If I could improve one thing about homework, what would it be?" The first answer that came to mind was probably, "Get rid of it!" Honestly, that would be my first response, too. However, homework is a fact of life and serves a very good purpose (whether we like it or not). So let's try again...

**If you could improve one thing about homework, what would it be?** Have your answer?

**I've asked this question to many students over the past 20 years. The four most common answers:**

- "I wish it didn't take so long to finish my homework!"
- "I wish I could stop losing assignments; it's dragging my grades down!"
- "I wish my parents would stop complaining that I wait until the 'last minute.'"
- "I wish homework didn't cause so many arguments at home!"

## Now that you know the problem, create a solution!

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**Once you recognize a problem, it's much easier to identify a solution.** The best solutions are “homework systems.” Systems are procedures or routines that help you simplify the issue and develop positive habits to overcome it.

**I could write an entire book on each of the problems above, but here are some quick examples of “solution systems” for each one:**

- 1. The main reason homework takes a long time is due to lack of focus.** If you fight to stay focused while doing homework, set an electronic timer for the amount of time you think an assignment should take and challenge yourself to beat the timer. Not only does this help you focus in on your work, it makes getting your homework done into a game!
- 2. If lost assignments are your issue, you first need to reduce the number of folders you have to manage.** Most students juggle 7-9 separate folders and 7-9 notebooks... up to 18 different supplies! No wonder assignments get lost! Start by streamlining all folders into one, 1” binder. Then, “Take Ten” every time you sit down to do your homework; two minutes to put all loose papers into their correct folders and the next eight minutes to review any handouts or notes from the day.
- 3. If you are a victim of “Last Minute Syndrome,” start having a Weekly Family Meeting.** This meeting is an informal gathering (usually on Sundays) where everyone shares their schedules for the upcoming week (including parents). Discuss sports schedules, upcoming tests/projects, needed supplies, etc. Ask your parents to share if they will be working late one night or have other after-school obligations that may impact the family. This system is a great cure for LMS because it encourages everyone to be proactive and plan ahead together.
- 4. To stop most of the arguing, follow steps 1-3.** It will eliminate at least 80% of your homework arguments.

These suggestions are merely examples, but they illustrate the concept of developing systems to help solve common homework problems.

**Tip for Parents: Whenever possible, involve your children in the search for solutions.** Children of all ages usually give honest and very insightful suggestions, especially when they feel like their input is taken seriously. The more input they can have in identifying reasonable solutions, the more willing they will be to participate.

**Homework inherently causes problems.** Ironically, one of the most significant purposes of homework is to learn how to solve problems. In almost every situation, a “recurring problem” can be solved with a “recurring solution,” better known as a “system.” To create your solution system:

1. Identify and label the problem so you can truly focus on a solution.

2. Brainstorm solutions that will simplify the problem and help everyone develop habits to overcome them.
3. Test your system. Be prepared to make adjustments and give it two-four weeks for it to take hold.
4. Recognize the fruits of your efforts! This is the best motivation for solving future problems.
5. I hope these homework tips make your life, your parents' lives, and your teachers' lives easier! To find out more systems you can implement to improve all aspects of school (besides just your homework), check out our interactive, self-guided online course, [here](#).

Happy New Year,

Susan

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