

ACTIVITIES FOR “THIS SONG IS MY HOMEWORK”

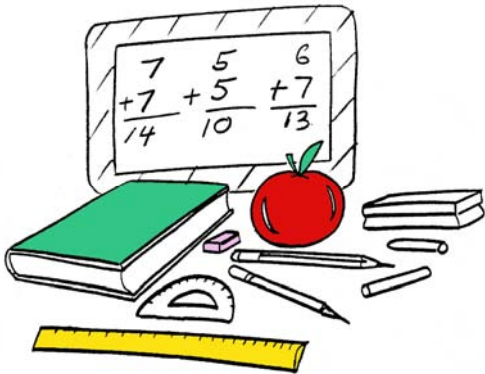
THEME: *Homework is a way to practice the skills you learn in school. When you experiment and think on your own, you really get to see how things work.*

WRITING: Listen to Tom Chapin’s song “This Song Is My Homework.” In the song, the teacher advises “The trick is to write what you know through and through.” When the boy in the song asks his brother for help, the brother replies, “Wow. This song will be short!”



Was his brother being helpful and supportive, or was he just being mean? What could he have suggested instead? What things do you know “through and through”? How to skate? Bake cookies? Take care of your pets? The story of your trip last summer? How to grow tomatoes? Facts about dinosaurs? What do you do if you are interested in something, but don’t know too much about it? Figure out what you are an expert in, and write a story or poem about it.

LANGUAGE ARTS: What is your favorite kind of homework? Do you like art projects? Solving math problems? Reading? Writing a story or a book report? Science experiments? Make up a homework assignment you think would be fun. Write it on a slip of paper and put it in a big bowl. Blindfold each student and let them choose an assignment. Do it that night, and discuss it with the class the next day. What is your least favorite type of assignment? What homework would you assign your teacher?



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ACTIVITIES FOR “THIS SONG IS MY HOMEWORK” (continued)

ORGANIZATION AND PLANNING: The boy in the song had many days to complete his homework assignment, but didn't start until the last minute. Putting things off is called procrastination, and causes undue anxiety as deadlines near. A good approach is to break down a large task into many small tasks. Each step depends on the completion of the step before. If the boy in the song had 4 days to write his song, he could set smaller goals to accomplish each day. On the first day he could talk to his parents and his brother and decide on a topic. On day two, he could write down some ideas about his topic. On day three, he could figure out what each verse would be about, and on day four he could put it into its final form.



To reinforce the idea of tasks and sequencing, make a game that the class can play individually or together. Cut out the images in the example below, or make up your own. Think of a project or event, and divide it into at least 5 smaller tasks. Illustrate each step on a card. Mix up the cards, and put them back in the correct sequence.

