

Montessori Adolescent Program – Homework

Exploration. Discovery. Understanding. Joy of learning.

A “No homework” policy means we will not set students specific homework each day, however, it does not mean they won’t complete some of their important work at home. They will always be expected to manage their time in order to meet the deadlines they have negotiated.

MAP students receive a rigorous grounding in language, maths, science, physical expression, creative expression and humanities. They also complete valuable adult-like work in the "occupations" curriculum and through running the “Micro-Economy”. Classroom work is integrated with field studies, interaction with visiting experts, work on designing and building the micro-farm and permaculture garden, as well as a broad range of wonderful experiences well beyond the classroom. When this work is approached in a wholly Montessori way, the end result lies not in a letter grade or diploma, but in the development of intellect, creativity, and independence. Teachers provide guidance, but also encourage students to work freely and independently.

Our goal is to aide the development of students who can transition easily not just to senior schooling and university, but also into a complex and constantly changing world in dire need of independent thinkers and innovative problem solvers.

We encourage adolescents to write their own problems, design their own follow-up activities, and determine for themselves what they need to do to experience understanding and success. Homework, in a Montessori sense, is work done at home as an extension of their own interests. Any work selected should be meaningful and of high interest – it should have a purpose.

Dr. Maria Montessori believed that children should be inspired and enthused by school activity and presentations such that their interest will sometimes carry over to after school hours. Given the opportunity, children will naturally create their own projects and challenge themselves. And sometimes they will also need to rest and rejuvenate. We must encourage them to listen to their bodies and their minds and guide them into healthy patterns of self-care and self-fulfillment. The Montessori approach is to provide a few well-placed suggestions for a variety of follow-up experiences and opportunities for learning – to simply plant the seeds for further independent learning. These suggestions can be found in their individual **Check In** reflections recorded on Compass, and on the **Work Ideas Matrix** overleaf. It is essential to trust that adolescents will create their own meaningful work without being compelled by teachers or parents.

“It all comes down to whether adults trust us to learn. Having no specific homework lets you find your own motivations.” *(Cleveland MHS senior Akila Subramanian)*

Rather than just focusing on academic developments, Montessori advocates aiding the overall development of each child as a human being. The more freedom adolescents have to make up their own problems and choose their own work, the more they should be able to challenge themselves and the better able they will become at evaluating themselves.

Dear Students - We trust you to learn

You can choose any work to follow up with. You should also finish off, or follow up, work from your classes if you need to. Be mindful of project deadlines you’ve negotiated.

There are no grades assigned to the work. If you need feedback please just ask.

You can choose to repeat any works as many times as you like. Sometimes repetition is vital for full understanding. You can also get new ideas from your teachers or peers.

The Work Ideas Matrix is simply provided so you have a few ideas for continuing your own important work if you get stuck.

The questions are there to help you reflect on your work – your learning – you do not need to formally answer them in any way.

Work Ideas Matrix

Reinforce or practice	Write a revision summary of what you are studying in any subject at school. <i>What subject did you summarise? Why?</i>	Build your maths skills by completing some problems of choice. <i>What was the topic you chose? Why?</i>	Complete further research on a lesson or project you have started at school. <i>What did you find out about? What will you do with this?</i>	Build your vocabulary skills by finding some new words from the dictionary and writing their definitions. Challenge yourself to use the new words at least 5 times in one day. <i>What are the words?</i>	Find a good online resource for the current topic in Humanities. Share with the class next lesson. <i>What is the URL? Why is it good?</i>
Connect or create	Discuss an article from the newspaper with a peer, teacher or family member. <i>What was the article called? What was it about?</i>	Consult an expert who can help you with something you are working on at school. <i>What did you ask? Can you share it with the class?</i>	Spend time drawing in your visual diary. <i>What did you draw?</i>	Spend time in the outdoors, enjoying the elements, use your senses to absorb and observe the beauty around you. <i>Where did you go? What do you remember most vividly?</i>	Create a poem for a topic you are studying at school. <i>What is it called? Can you share it?</i>
Read or Write	Watch the news. <i>Is there something you want to find out more about? Is this worth talking about with others?</i>	Read a book. <i>What was it called? Did you have a favorite part?</i>	Write a book review for the school newsletter. <i>What book did you choose? Will you submit it?</i>	Write a movie review for the school newsletter. <i>What is the title of the movie? Will you submit it?</i>	Listen to a song of choice and describe what the lyrics are about and/or how it made you feel. <i>What is the song called?</i>
Scientific investigation	Find a scientific fact to share with a peer. <i>What was your fact? Is there more to find out?</i>	Design a science experiment (think carefully about safety!). <i>What is your aim? What materials do you need?</i>	Carry out a science experiment safely. <i>What did you find out? How could you improve the experiment?</i>	Write up a science prac report. <i>What was the conclusion? How is this relevant to life?</i>	Investigate the weather predictions for one week and record the actual weather observations. <i>What were the differences? Can you find out more about predicting weather?</i>
For others	Do something unexpected and helpful at home/for someone else. <i>What did you choose to do? Why?</i>	Cook a meal for your family. <i>What was on the menu? Could it be improved next time?</i>	Contact a relative or friend who lives far away. <i>Who did you choose? What was the most interesting thing you discussed?</i>	Volunteer for a local charity or community organization. <i>What is it called and who does it help?</i>	Find a computer game that teaches a concept covered in class. <i>What is the URL? What is the topic?</i>
Be active	Create a training program that suits the activities you enjoy out of school. <i>How long will you train for? What are your aims for your program?</i>	Play a sport. <i>Was it a team sport or individual sport?</i>	Go for a walk. You could take your dog. <i>Where did you go? What did you enjoy most?</i>	Practice an instrument to improve at least one specific thing. <i>What did you focus on?</i>	There are endless possibilities for your own ideas too of course...!