



# High School English Homework Design Based on Unit-integrated Teaching

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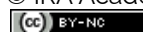
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## ABSTRACT

The problem of improving the quality of homework, how to design, explore and study the whole teaching of English units in senior high schools, under the national "double reduction" policy has been continuously concerned and discussed based on the cultivation of core literacy in the English discipline, based on the analysis of the learning situation and teaching experience, the study proposes the principles of counting in the perspective of unit holistic teaching: wholeness, practicability and diversity. It is suggested to carry out homework practice based on the overall teaching of the unit by designing holistic homework, practical homework and diversified homework. Diversification of evaluation subjects, multidimensional evaluation objectives, diversification of evaluation forms, whole process of evaluation operation, and personalized evaluation feedback will be used to carry out the evaluation of assignments based on the unit teaching as a whole.

**Keywords:** senior high school English; Unit whole teaching; Job design

In July 2021, the General Office of the Central Committee of the CPC and the State Council pointed out in the *Opinions on Further Reducing the Students' Homework Burden and Off-campus Training Burden in Compulsory Education*: "The quality of homework design should be improved. Give full play to the functions of homework: diagnosis, consolidation, learning situation analysis, etc. Incorporate homework into the teaching and research system. And systematically design basic homework that conforms to age characteristics and learning rules and reflects the orientation of quality education. Encourage the arrangement of layered, flexible and personalized operations, resolutely overcome mechanical and ineffective operations, and put an end to repetitive and punitive operations." This has aroused great concern about homework design inside and outside the education circle. The "double reduction" policy guides teachers to optimize classroom teaching, but also pay attention to the optimal design and evaluation methods of English homework, so as to realize the educational value of English subjects.

Reflecting on the requirement of "double reduction", the common problems in the design and assignment of senior high school English are that the quality of after-school homework is not high, and students spend a long time and have a heavy burden. Homework is mainly written work, the form is too simple, and the content is mostly mechanical repetitive training and exercises that focus on consolidating and implementing the knowledge and skills learned in class. Teachers design and assign homework at will, lacking overall planning and hierarchy. In addition, homework evaluation is "one size fits all" and lacks motivation.

Following the suggestion of unit teaching put forward by *English Curriculum Standards for Senior High Schools (2017 Edition, revised in 2020)*, teachers should re-recognize and reflect on the necessity and importance of optimizing homework design from the perspective of unit whole teaching. This paper expounds the design, implementation and evaluation of homework in the whole teaching of English subject units, and discusses the practical ways to enhance the effectiveness of homework

after class, aiming at promoting the integrated development of students' core literacy in English subject and implementing the fundamental task of educating people.

## **I. Homework Design Based on Unit Whole Teaching**

### **1. Function of Homework**

As an extension of classroom learning, homework activities can "optimize students' learning emotions, improve students' information processing ability, improve students' self-management ability, and improve students, learning help-seeking ability". Therefore, the process of students completing their homework is not only the practical process of applying what they have learned to solve problems, but also the process of internalizing what they have learned and forming their autonomous learning ability.

Homework is inextricably linked with teaching and evaluation. Homework after class and classroom teaching jointly promote students' development, which determines curriculum reform, learning resources adjustment and good study habits. Homework can help students consolidate the knowledge and skills they have learned in class, and at the same time, it can cultivate students' learning responsibility and enthusiasm, learning interest and self-confidence, metacognitive ability, problem-solving ability and innovative practice ability. Homework goes beyond the limitation of students' study in school, which helps students to deepen their understanding of what they have learned in class, expand their learning resources, adjust their learning strategies and develop good study habits.

### **2. Basis of Homework Design**

In order to reduce the randomness of homework design and increase the effectiveness, teachers should change their homework design from practice based on their own experience or textbooks to teaching content and teaching objectives based on unit-integrated teaching. Homework objectives should be consistent with curriculum and teaching objectives, and the design of homework evaluation and correction should be planned as a whole, with homework design to jointly point to the quality of students' learning results. Homework design based on curriculum and teaching objectives requires teachers to consider the curriculum standards, teaching materials, teaching progress and content as an expert.

Under the background of the new curriculum, homework should be student-centered. During the whole homework process, teachers should fully mobilize and give play to students' initiative, enthusiasm and creativity by using learning environment elements such as situation, cooperation and conversation, and finally achieve the goal of enabling students to effectively construct the meaning of knowledge. In addition, teachers can also try to design homework based on school, so as to make the homework more targeted, reflect the school's educational philosophy, fully meet the learning and development needs of students in our school, and at the same time make the homework a "business card" that reflects the value orientation of school education and the quality of education and teaching.

### **3. Principles of Homework Design**

Unit-integrated teaching is based on the textbook unit, combining with students' cognitive experience, development needs and learning logic, analyzing, reorganizing and integrating the contents with internal relevance to form an integrated and relevant teaching unit, so as to make an orderly planning of teaching elements and optimize teaching design. As an organic part of teaching design, homework design should start from the whole teaching, pay attention to its integrity, practicality and diversity, deepen students' understanding of the theme of each text in the unit, give play to the educational value of the unit, and promote the integrated development of students' core literacy.

#### **(1) Integrity**

The homework design for the whole unit teaching needs to consider and design the whole unit homework based on the logic between the unit theme and each text. Holistic homework design realizes the teaching mode of "whole in and whole out" by guiding students to make overall output based on input and expressing meaning. In this process, students can combine the input of multimodal discourse, use their language knowledge to carry out cognitive activities such as generalization, analysis, judgment, imagination, reasoning and evaluation, give full play to their initiative and enthusiasm in learning, naturally acquire language in thoughtful, meaningful language practice activities, and comprehensively improve their language literacy, thinking literacy and humanistic literacy. Teachers can take the topic inquiry as a clue, design relevant sub-class assignments, step by step, gradually explore the unit theme, and finally design integrated output tasks to realize deep learning of the unit theme. In addition, teachers can also design project-based learning, arrange unit projects at the beginning of the unit, disperse the unit output tasks in each teaching class, and finally achieve them in a jigsaw puzzle. The homework design of integrated output is helpful to cultivate students' awareness and ability to apply what they have learned, enhance their interest in learning, enhance their language ability, learning ability and cultural awareness, ensure the advanced development of students' multi-dimensional literacy integration, and provide the basis for evaluating the unit learning effect.

#### **(2) Practicality**

Based on the unit theme, teachers should carry out comprehensive and relevant learning practice that points to the development of the core literacy of the discipline by integrating the course content, so as to guide students not only to pay attention to and acquire the language and cultural knowledge in the sense of the theme, but also to complete superficial learning, and according to the theme context, enable students to carry out learning activities beyond the discourse in the process of solving new situational problems, such as reasoning and argumentation, imagination and creation, criticism and evaluation, and promote deep learning characterized by high-order thinking intervention and healthy cultural enlightenment. Improving the development of students' thinking quality must be carried out in classroom teaching and extracurricular learning, which is the basic way to promote the development of students' thinking quality. Practical

homework refers to students' practical activities of communicating in English, emphasizing that students acquire knowledge through personal experience or practice knowledge with their own actions in real life, and use the acquired knowledge to solve real life problems. Help students to develop self-views, develop diversified thinking and establish value orientation, so as to have the ability to solve "cognitive narrowness" and learn how to "express ideas". Therefore, teachers need to use real language materials, provide real context, design real activities based on the theme content and meaning, create a large number of written and oral expression opportunities, guide students to apply what they have learned to life, stimulate students' enthusiasm for learning, and cultivate students' creative problem-solving ability, thus effectively improving their language ability and thinking ability.

### **(3) Variety**

Homework design is based on the comprehensive consideration of the learning quality that students should know, can do and expect to do, instead of being random. Therefore, teachers should design hierarchical and differentiated homework to meet the diverse learning needs of students. For senior high school students with different levels, interests and needs, homework design needs to be diversified in form and evaluation, so as to help students independently complete learning activities suitable for their own level, interests and future development needs, reflect teaching students in accordance with their aptitude, and realize burden reduction and efficiency improvement. Even in the same school, different students in the same class have different levels of mastery after the same content is taught by the same teacher, which determines that one-size-fits-all homework is not conducive to teachers' objective understanding of students' learning situation. Based on the differences of students' English level, teachers should consider the balance between foundation and improvement when designing homework, pay full attention to the differences of different students' abilities, design hierarchical homework or provide selective homework to meet the development needs of different student groups so that each student can learn something by completing homework, step by step, and finally realize the transformation of knowledge into ability and literacy. In addition, in the face of students' diversified learning interests and development needs, teachers need to set up diversified and open homework based on specific unit learning content and objectives, and guide students to actively integrate and complete homework, which will help students give full play to their creativity and deepen the exploration of the theme significance.

## **II. Homework Practice Based on Unit-integrated Teaching**

### **1. Design Holistic Assignments Based on Unit Themes**

In the unit-integrated teaching, activity design should be based on the exploration of theme meaning, while homework design should focus on the correlation and extension between multiple output activities, and integrate the learned language knowledge, cultural knowledge, language skills and learning strategies.

Teachers can take the exploration of theme meaning as a clue to design progressive homework, so that homework can serve the overall teaching goal of the unit. Taking Unit 5 *Working the Land* as an example, teachers sorted out and integrated the contents of the unit and divided it into five small units: starting from the world hunger problem, entering the representative figures who have contributed to solving the world agricultural problems, scientific and technological innovation to solve the food problem and sustainable agriculture, and finally staying in our actions and future. For these five small units, the teacher designed the following assignments respectively: summarizing the measures taken by FAO to solve the world hunger problem; Introduce Yuan Longping or other figures who have made outstanding contributions in the agricultural field with the title of "My Food Hero"; Report the latest agricultural scientific and technological innovation achievement from the angle of 5W1H (when, where, who, what, why and how); Contribute to the newspaper and share personal views on the advantages and disadvantages of chemical farming and organic farming; Suppose you are an official from the World Food and Agriculture Organization and invited to give a speech on the world food problem at the United Nations General Assembly. By completing the last assignment, students can integrate the content and language of the previous four assignments, and after studying four small units and exploring the theme of each unit from different perspectives and dimensions, students gradually form a deeper understanding of agriculture and hunger, and fully realize that everyone must act and establish a sense of community of human destiny.

In addition, teachers can also design project-based learning as the overall output task of the unit, so that students can realize the integration and improvement of language thinking in application. For example, Unit 2 *Travelling Around*, a compulsory senior high school English textbook published by People's Education Press, revolves around the theme of "travel", which involves planning, preparation before departure, introduction of scenic spots, civilized behavior of tourism and discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of tourism development. On the basis of understanding listening and reading the text, students learn to know the famous scenic spots and cultural characteristics of China and Peru, cultivate patriotic feelings and broaden their international horizons by booking and arranging food, accommodation and transportation during the trip. At the same time, avoid all kinds of inappropriate behaviors during travel and establish a sense of civilized tourists. In addition, through the analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of tourism, students think and reflect on the problems caused by the development of tourism, and improve their critical thinking ability and innovative thinking ability. Considering the overall content of the unit, the teacher arranged a clear unit project for the students at the beginning of the unit: designing a 10-day trip to China for the pen pal Jim's family who planned to travel to China in the summer vacation, including the cities to visit, scenic spots, recommended activities and reasons, and warm tips on matters needing attention during the trip. Teachers need to provide process guidance, lay out various stages for each aspect of the unit project, give timely feedback, pay attention to the operation effect and set up every step to ensure that the final output task can

be completed with high quality. In this process, students acquire relevant language knowledge and cultural knowledge in each class, make travel plans for themselves and make good preparations for language, content and cognition, gradually reach unit projects, and realize the transfer and application of what they have learned.

#### **4. Design Practical Homework in Combination with Real Life**

Design assignments need to create real scenarios. Situational settings are related to students' life experience as much as possible, and the common problems in students' life or study are taken as the starting point, which not only helps to stimulate students' interest to become the best tutor, but also guides students to learn independently. The text in the reading and writing section of Unit 1 *Teenage Life* is a letter of advice from Susan Luo, a youth consultant, to a teenager who is worried because his friend is addicted to computer games and the Internet. As the first learning unit in senior high school, this unit aims to help students truly and objectively understand and think about senior high school life, plan their future study and life with a positive and sunny attitude, cope with the problems they face, and achieve better self. This is very necessary and timely for students who have just entered high school life. However, the task of reading and writing is too narrow, and it is not suitable for all students. Therefore, after learning about the challenges faced by the protagonist Adam in the text in the previous reading section, the teacher asked the students about their own difficulties and challenges as high school freshmen, wrote down the questions that they needed to consult and help in their study or life on a note, and briefly described the problems. If you are worried about privacy issues, you can choose to be anonymous or change your handwriting, and then put it in a carton. In the reading and writing class, each person draws a piece of paper from the carton, and all people (including teachers) discuss their ideas in pairs, make suggestions to each other, and then complete the first draft of the suggestion letter. Students exchange the first draft, and evaluate and discuss each other according to the peer evaluation criteria in the study plan. The homework is to revise the first draft according to the results of peer evaluation, and write the second draft in the composition book. In order to ensure that every student can get a solution to his own problem, the teacher has set up an electronic file, taking photos of the students' second drafts in a unified way, and then uploading them to the class group. Everyone can choose the solutions proposed by their classmates in combination with their own problems, and also get some inspiration from other people's problems and solutions.

The homework task in this real situation is closely related to students' life and classroom learning. The flexibility and personalized of homework make students feel full of interest, which significantly improves their learning enthusiasm and homework quality. In the process of completing homework, students can use what they have learned to solve problems for their classmates and gain a sense of accomplishment. While improving their language ability, students can also realize that it is normal to encounter difficulties and challenges, and they are not alone, so that their thinking quality and cultural awareness can be developed.

## 5. Meet the Development Needs and Design Diversified Operations

When assigning homework, teachers can combine what they have learned in the unit with students' development needs, enrich the forms of homework, and don't stick to a single written homework. Teachers should make full use of multi-modal teaching resources, guide students to explore the background knowledge of the unit theme independently after class, and expand students' understanding of the unit theme. For example, teachers can arrange homework such as reading aloud and dubbing through listening and speaking software. When learning about Lin Qiaozhi's deeds in Unit 2 *Morals and Virtues* because John Lin lived for a long time away from the current students, even if students learned about her experiences in listening and reading texts, their understanding of her was not comprehensive enough. Teachers can provide students with an introduction about John Lin's movie *Love Like Heaven* or *China Daily* about her deeds, and extend the classroom to extracurricular activities, so that students can broaden their learning resources.

At the same time, designing diversified output tasks can reflect students' learning more comprehensively and effectively. When teaching Unit 5 *Languages Around the World*, a compulsory course in the People's Education Edition textbook, the teacher assigned an assignment to express personal attitude towards Chinese characters with five-line poems and provided examples. In the process of completing the homework, the students made a systematic and in-depth inquiry into the theme of Chinese characters in this unit, learned about the ups and downs of Chinese characters, realized the significance of the Chinese character system to the continuation and inheritance of Chinese civilization, mastered language knowledge and skills, and enhanced cultural self-confidence. In addition, in the unit of *Festivals and Celebration*, the teacher assigned the homework task of recording vlog to express Chinese New Year greetings and introducing the origin, customs and diet of the Spring Festival in China to foreign pen pals during the Spring Festival. Various forms of homework tasks fully mobilize students' interest and motivation in learning and promote students' personalized development.

Each student's zone of proximal development (ZPD) is different. In order to make each student feel a sense of accomplishment and improve on their original level, teachers can also arrange hierarchical or classified homework for students to choose, or mark the homework that must be done and selected, and integrate the quality, time, suitability and incentive factors required for efficient homework, so that students can choose the homework that they can control.

Students can choose suitable tasks according to their actual level, and apply what they have learned to activities at different levels of thinking, such as analysis, judgment, evaluation, imagination and creation, according to different output types of evaluation, rewriting and continuation after reading, so as to gradually realize the transformation from knowledge to ability and from ability to literacy.

## III. Homework Evaluation Based on Unit-integrated Teaching

From the perspective of "evaluation", homework is not only a means for teachers to diagnose



and evaluate students' learning, but also a way for students to understand the self-learning process. Therefore, homework evaluation is a way to verify the evidence of teaching effect and discover students' success and highlights. When evaluating students' homework, teachers should pay attention to the diversity of individual students, the diversity of evaluation forms and the comprehensiveness of evaluation contents. Good evaluation results can not only reflect the current situation of students' level, but also help students build up their self-confidence and stimulate their interest in learning.

### **1. Diversification of Evaluation Subjects**

Students' self-evaluation and mutual evaluation can effectively mobilize students to actively participate in evaluation and promote the diversification of evaluation subjects. Teachers can guide students to learn to self-evaluate, reflect, regulate and improve their own learning by analyzing typical cases and giving comments. Teachers can also build a platform for homework exchange, invite students to show and share their final drafts of homework, and guide students to learn from each other, learn from each other and make progress together by means of mutual evaluation. The texts can continue the unit theme and meet the students' cognitive level.

### **2. Multi-dimensional Evaluation Objectives**

Evaluation is not only a means to diagnose students' learning quality, guide students' learning methods and directions, but also a basis to test teachers' teaching effect and constantly adjust teaching methods. The goal of homework evaluation should be consistent with the unit goal and the class goal, and guide the determination of evaluation standards and the selection of evaluation methods. On the basis of pre-class diagnosis and immediate evaluation in class, teachers can check and feedback the increment of students' learning in this class or this unit through different types of homework after class, that is, the students' mastery of the unit learning content and the degree of achievement of learning goals, which provides reference and lays a foundation for the teaching and learning of the next class or the next unit.

### **3. Diversification of Evaluation Forms**

Teachers should make full use of demonstration, report, performance, communication, self-evaluation and mutual evaluation, so that every student can have the opportunity to show and discover their talents after completing their homework. For example, for students who are good at designing and painting, the homework of designing posters will provide them with a place to use; For students who are good at creation and performance, the homework of adapting and performing the textbook drama will provide them with a stage for cooperation and discovering each other's advantages; For students who are good at searching and screening information, conducting surveys and doing experiments, field research assignments will help them understand the actual situation of their families and society, and put forward reasonable suggestions based on scientific analysis and rational thinking of the data. Diversified forms of homework evaluation help teachers to

discover the potential of each student, help students to enhance their interest in learning, and enhance their sense of acquisition and self-confidence in learning.

#### **4. Whole Process of Evaluation Operation**

The evaluation of homework should conform to the unit teaching objectives and the actual situation of students, and become an organic part of classroom teaching. For example, for the diagnostic homework before the start of unit learning, the inspection and evaluation of homework can be naturally completed during the implementation of unit classroom teaching. For example, learners of English textbooks published by People's Education Press are required to choose four courses, Unit 4 Adversity and Courage. Teachers arrange students to answer several questions in advance: What's adversity in your eyes? What adversities have you encountered? What are effective ways for you to deal with the adversities? What unsolved adversities do you have? The first two questions can be shared and evaluated in the introduction part of the first lesson of the unit, while the third question can be evaluated before the listening activity, and the fourth question is integrated into the speaking link, which also paves the way for the next lesson of the unit.

#### **5. Individuation of Evaluation Feedback**

For different forms of homework, teachers should pay attention to and be good at using comments as an opportunity to communicate with students one-on-one, and give positive feedback to the highlights of students' homework in combination with qualitative evaluation. In view of the problems in homework, teachers should summarize and put forward specific improvement suggestions in time. In the face of different chemistry situations, teachers should flexibly give the evaluation of homework quality, accurately analyze each student's problems, and give evaluation according to the students' own ability level and development needs, so as to achieve one person and one policy. For students with relatively weak foundation, teachers should set appropriate small goals in stages to guide students to break through one by one and improve continuously.

### **IV. Conclusion**

Teachers should re-examine and study the function and value of homework as an important part of teaching from the perspective of "teaching, learning and evaluation". Teachers should improve teaching based on homework, break through the boundary between classroom teaching and after-school homework through the idea of "classroom+homework" linkage optimization, and extensively carry out the exploration and practice of inciting classroom teaching structure and quality reform with homework. Teachers should also judge the content, cycle (duration), form and function of homework based on whether it can effectively promote students' learning, improve the pertinence of design and assignment, avoid randomness, and effectively ensure the effectiveness of reducing burdens, improving quality and increasing efficiency.

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