

□ WRITING PIECE 1 - FEEDBACK

Section 1:

#1 (First paragraph): Strengths:

- Strong opening that immediately identifies the problem
- Effective use of descriptive language to paint a vivid classroom scenario

Weaknesses: Underdeveloped argument → Your opening paragraph touches on the issue but doesn't fully establish the urgency of the problem. The phrase "While phones can be useful tools" weakens your stance by appearing uncertain about your position.

Exemplar: *Mobile phones have become an overwhelming disruption in today's classrooms, drastically reducing students' ability to focus and learn effectively.*

#2 (Third paragraph): Strengths:

- Good use of specific examples
- Clear presentation of positive outcomes

Weaknesses: Lack of supporting details → Your discussion about improved academic performance needs more concrete examples. The phrase "teachers report higher levels of participation" leaves readers wondering about specific improvements in student engagement.

Exemplar: *Students show remarkable improvements in class participation, with pupils actively engaging in discussions and completing tasks with greater focus.*

#3 (Final paragraph): Strengths:

- Strong concluding statement
- Good connection between academic and social benefits

Weaknesses: Weak conclusion structure → Your final paragraph attempts to balance both sides rather than reinforcing your main argument. The phrase "While mobile phones have their uses" undermines your previous points about banning phones.

Exemplar: *Banning mobile phones creates an environment where students can truly flourish, developing both their academic abilities and social skills without digital distractions.*

■ Your persuasive piece presents a timely issue that affects many schools today. To strengthen your argument, focus on developing each paragraph with more detailed examples of how phone bans positively impact student learning. Your third paragraph would be more convincing if you included specific examples of how students interact without phones. Also, consider restructuring your final paragraph to emphasise the benefits of a phone-free environment rather than acknowledging phone benefits. Additionally, your second paragraph could benefit from describing actual classroom scenarios showing improved student focus. Your piece would be stronger if you added more emotional appeal by describing how students feel more connected to their classmates without phones.

Score: 44/50

Section 2:

#1 Imagine a classroom where students are meant to be solving math problems, but instead, their eyes are glued to their phones, scrolling through social media or texting friends. This scenario is all too common in schools today, and it highlights a growing problem: mobile phones are disrupting learning. ~~While phones can be useful tools, their presence in schools often does more harm than good.~~ [Mobile phones significantly disrupt the learning environment, causing more harm than any potential benefits they might offer.] Schools should ban mobile phones to minimise distractions, improve academic performance, and foster a healthier learning environment.

#2 Mobile phones are a major source of distraction in classrooms. Studies show that students who use phones during class are more likely to miss important information and perform poorly on tests. For example, a 2020 study by the London School of Economics found that banning phones in schools led to a 6.4% increase in test scores, equivalent to adding five extra days to the school year. When students are distracted by their phones, they not only fall behind academically but also disrupt their peers, creating a ripple effect that harms the entire class. By banning phones, schools can create a focused environment where students are fully engaged in their lessons. This leads to the next point: improved academic performance.

#3 Banning phones can significantly boost students' academic achievements. In schools where phones are banned, teachers report higher levels of participation and better-quality work. For instance, a high school in Australia saw a 25% improvement in homework completion rates after implementing a phone ban. Without the constant temptation to check notifications, students can concentrate better, retain more information, and perform well in exams. Schools can provide lockers or secure storage for phones during the day, ensuring students are not tempted to use them. Beyond academics, banning phones also promotes healthier social interactions.

Phones can negatively impact students' social skills and mental health. Excessive phone use has been linked to increased anxiety, depression, and loneliness among teenagers. A 2019 study by the University of Michigan found that students who spent more time on their phones were less likely to engage in face-to-face conversations, leading to weaker social bonds. ~~Overreliance~~ [Over-reliance] on phones can isolate students and hinder their ability to communicate effectively, which is essential for teamwork and building relationships. A phone ban encourages students to interact with each other during breaks, fostering genuine friendship and better communication skills. These benefits make a strong case for banning phones in schools.

While mobile phones have their uses, their presence in schools often undermines learning, social development, and mental health. By banning phones, schools can create a focused, productive, and socially enriching environment where students can thrive. It's time to prioritise education over entertainment and give students the tools they need to succeed—both academically and socially.

□ WRITING PIECE 2 - FEEDBACK

Section 1:

#1 (First paragraph): Strengths:

- Strong opening with vivid imagery of a tired student
- Clear introduction of the main argument about homework's negative impact

Weaknesses: Limited development of the central argument → Your opening paragraph presents the problem but doesn't fully establish the opposing viewpoints about homework's benefits. The phrase "once seen as a tool for reinforcing learning" needs more context about why this traditional view is being challenged.

Exemplar: *While homework was traditionally viewed as essential for academic growth, mounting evidence suggests it has become a source of unnecessary stress that undermines student wellbeing and equal learning opportunities.*

#2 (Second paragraph): Strengths:

- Effective use of research evidence
- Clear connection between homework and student stress

Weaknesses: Underdeveloped support for claims → Your paragraph mentions student anxiety but doesn't fully explore the connection between homework and mental health impacts. The phrase "burnout, reducing motivation to learn" needs more specific examples of how this affects students daily.

Exemplar: *Students report feeling overwhelmed and anxious about homework, leading to decreased motivation and engagement in class, while missing out on vital activities that build confidence and creativity.*

#3 (Final paragraph): Strengths:

- Presents a clear alternative solution
- Uses a specific example (Finland) effectively

Weaknesses: Incomplete exploration of the proposed solution → Your conclusion suggests replacing homework with in-class tasks but doesn't fully explain how this would address the inequality issues raised earlier. The phrase "group projects or reflective journaling" needs more detail about implementation.

Exemplar: *By shifting to collaborative in-class activities and guided project work, schools can ensure all students receive equal support and opportunity to learn, regardless of their home circumstances.*

■ Your persuasive piece makes a compelling argument about homework's impact on student wellbeing and equality. To strengthen your writing, focus on developing deeper connections between your evidence and claims. In the first paragraph, you could expand on how homework specifically creates stress and inequality. Also, when discussing the Australian study results, include more concrete examples of how homework affects students' daily lives. Additionally, your solution about in-class tasks could be stronger if you explained how specific activities would help different types of learners. Try to include more student voices and real-world examples throughout your piece to make your arguments more convincing. Remember to clearly link each paragraph to your main argument about replacing traditional homework.

Score: 43/50

Section 2:

Picture a student hunched over their desk at 9:00 pm, eyes drooping as they scramble to finish a mountain of homework. Across the city, another student gives up entirely, overwhelmed by tasks they don't understand. #1 Homework, once seen as a tool for reinforcing learning, has become a source of stress and inequality. While it has its merits, the negative impacts of homework outweigh its benefits. Schools should ban traditional homework to prioritise student wellbeing, equity, and meaningful learning.

#2 Homework often creates unnecessary stress for students and families. A 2023 study by the University of Melbourne found that 70% of Australian primary students reported feeling anxious about homework, with many staying up late to complete it. This stress can lead to burnout, ~~reducing~~ [reduces] motivation to learn and ~~harming~~ [harms] mental health. ~~Banning homework~~ [Removing homework requirements] would allow students to recharge after school, spend time with family, and pursue ~~hobbies—activities~~ [hobbies - activities] crucial for developing creativity and resilience. Without the pressure of homework, students could return to class refreshed and ready to engage.

Critics argue that homework reinforces classroom learning and teaches responsibility. They claim that practising skills at home helps students master topics like maths or spelling. While this may hold true for some, homework often widens the gap between students. Those with access to tutors, quiet study spaces, or supportive parents gain an unfair advantage, while others fall behind.

For example, a child caring for siblings after school may lack time or energy to complete assignments, deepening educational inequality. Homework doesn't teach responsibility—it highlights privilege.

#3 A better solution is to replace homework with in-class tasks or project-based learning. Schools could structure the day for independent practice, ensuring all students receive equal support. For instance, Finland—a global leader in education—banned homework years ago and instead focuses on collaborative, hands-on activities during school hours. Australian schools could adopt similar approaches, such as group projects or reflective journaling, to deepen understanding without burdening families.

Homework is an outdated practice that fails to meet the needs of modern students. By banning it, schools can reduce stress, level the playing field, and focus on ~~equitable~~ [equal] learning. Homework shouldn't determine a student's success—their in-class engagement should.