



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF AMERICA**



PowerHour

:making minutes count

A Guide to
After-school
Homework Help
and Tutoring

JCPenney



National
Presenting
Sponsor



PowerHour

:making minutes count

A Guide to After-school
Homework Help and Tutoring

Resource Guide



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF AMERICA

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In today's world of greater accountability for schools and teachers, homework is playing an increasingly vital role in the success of young people. For years, Boys & Girls Clubs have been helping members complete homework assignments and prepare for school. Today, it is more important than ever for Clubs to partner with schools and families to give youth the support, resources and guidance they need to complete their homework and start the school day with a sense of readiness.

This newly revised Power Hour: Making Minutes Count has been developed to provide Boys & Girls Club staff with the strategies and tools needed to implement a comprehensive homework help and tutoring program for all members aged 6 to 18 years. Power Hour is an essential element of the Project Learn strategy. By encouraging members to develop the daily habit of completing homework and study in a quiet, dedicated space with adult support, Power Hour helps members make a commitment to school and learning.

Power Hour builds on the philosophy that the benefits of homework are threefold – academic, behavioral and social. Young people who consistently complete their homework develop a deeper understanding of the work, and are ready to move on to more challenging concepts.ⁱ In addition, homework completion leads to long-term improvements in members' grades and test scores.

Beyond the academic benefit, consistent homework completion helps young people develop valuable organizational skills – including time management, prioritization and task completion.ⁱⁱ These skills not only are necessary for achievement in school but also are a foundation for a successful life. In addition, young people who have their homework completed enter the classroom with a sense of confidence and are prepared to engage in the activities of the school day.ⁱⁱⁱ

Studies have shown that consistent homework completion is critical to success in school. By dedicating significant Club resources to Power Hour, your Club is sending a clear message – to Club members, parents and teachers – that the Club values and honors academic success.

Whether you will be implementing Power Hour for the first time this school year or have been helping young people with homework for years, the Power Hour Resource Guide will provide you with a comprehensive framework for making every minute count for the future of the young people we serve.

Roxanne Spillett
President

ⁱ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2001). *The Condition of Education 2001*, NCES 2001-072. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

ⁱⁱ Corno, Lyn. (2000). Looking at Homework Differently. *The Elementary School Journal*, 100/i5, 529.

ⁱⁱⁱ Feggella, Kathy. (1994). 10 tips for Giving Better Homework. *Instructor*, 104/2, 83(3).



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Introduction

Boys & Girls Clubs of America's Guiding Principles	1
What is Power Hour?	1
Power Hour and Project Learn	2
Program Outcome Model.	3
Overview of the Resource Guide.	4
Program Philosophy and Purpose.	4
The Benefits of Homework Completion.	5
Program Objectives.	6

Program Components

Quick Start Guide	7
Homework and Tutoring Help	8
Worksheets and Activities	9
Incentives and Rewards	10
Record-keeping	13

Starting a Power Hour Program

Voluntary vs. Mandatory Programs	15
General Recommendations	16
Attracting Members	17
Recruiting Volunteers	17
Communication and Outreach.	19
Materials Needed	20
Creating the Learning Center Space	22
Scheduling Considerations.	24
Assessing Members' Individual Needs.	24
Setting Target Goals for Members	24
Member Orientation	25
Identifying the Need for Tutors.	26
Funding Proposals and Strategies	26

Implementing a Power Hour Program

Responsibilities of the Program Coordinator	27
When Members Finish Early	28
Power Points, Power Poster, Power Rewards.	29
Using a Theme.	29
Overcoming Members' Resistance to Homework	30
Specific Ideas by Age Group	32
Special-Needs and Hard-to-Reach Youth	34
The Use of Technology and the Internet.	35

Keeping in Touch With Parents	36
Maintaining Contact With Teachers	36
Special Events	37
Ongoing Training and Assessment of Volunteers and Tutors	38

Working With Teens (Grades 6-12)

Understanding Teens' Unique Needs	39
Creating a Teen Learning Center	40
Challenges for Volunteers.	41
Younger Teens (Grades 6-8)	41
Teens as Mentors – Peer Tutoring	43
The Importance of Tutors for Teens.	43

About Tutoring

When to Use Tutors	45
Introducing Members, Tutors and Parents	45
Where to Locate Tutoring Sessions	46
How a Tutoring Session Should Function.	46
Reading Tips for Tutors	47
When a Tutor-Member Pairing is not Working	49

Homework – Additional Information

Challenges to Successful Homework Completion	51
Case Studies of Effective Programs	52

Resources

Web Sites for Worksheets	55
Homework Help on the Web.	55
Skill Development on the Web.	56
Web Sites for Tutoring	56
Inexpensive Software Titles	56
Books of Puzzles	57
Project Learn Outcome Model	58

Endnotes 60



Web Resources and Tools

Clubs can access the forms and tools needed to run the program by visiting the B&GCA Web site at www.bgca.net. Go to the program page, and click on *Power Hour* to find the following supplemental forms:

Record-keeping

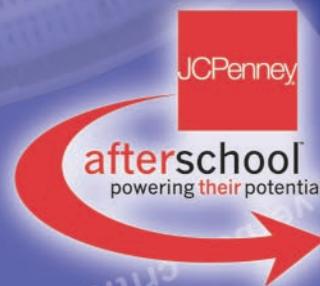
- ✦ Check-in Sheet
- ✦ Master Tracker
- ✦ Power Recorder

Communication

- ✦ Homework Help Contract
- ✦ Volunteer Interview Questions
- ✦ Letter to Parents
- ✦ Homework Help Hints for Parents (English)
- ✦ Homework Help Hints for Parents (Spanish)
- ✦ Letter to Teacher or Principal
- ✦ Sample Press Release
- ✦ Member/Tutor “Getting to Know You” Questions
- ✦ Tutoring Contract

Fund-raising

- ✦ Sample Funding Proposal



After-school programs help kids succeed. The JCPenney Afterschool Fund sponsors Boys & Girls Clubs of America initiatives and others to provide safe and innovative after-school programs that help kids to "Power their Potential."



Boys & Girls Clubs of America's Guiding Principles

Core Beliefs

All Boys & Girls Clubs are founded on a set of core beliefs that guides all activities, programs and staff members:

- ✦ A Club is a safe place to learn and grow.
- ✦ A Club offers ongoing relationships with caring, adult professionals.
- ✦ A Club provides life-enhancing programs and character-development exercises.
- ✦ A Club offers hope and opportunity.

Our Mission

The mission of the Boys & Girls Clubs of America is to inspire and enable all young people, especially those from disadvantaged circumstances, to realize their full potential as productive, responsible and caring citizens.

Youth Development Strategy

Club programs and services promote and enhance the development of boys and girls by instilling in them:

A Sense of Competence – the feeling there is something they can do and do well;

A Sense of Usefulness – the opportunity to do something of value for other people;

A Sense of Belonging – a setting where young people know they "fit" and are accepted;

A Sense of Power or Influence – a chance to be heard and to influence decisions.

The Youth Development Strategy, when fully implemented, not only helps to enhance members' self-esteem but also creates an environment in which boys and girls can achieve their full potential.

What is Power Hour?

A comprehensive **homework help** and **tutoring program** for all members aged 6 to 18 years, Power Hour is one of the key components of the Project Learn strategy. By implementing the Power Hour program, Clubs also are offering a critical component of the Project Learn strategy.

Power Hour provides members with the support, resources and guidance necessary to **complete their homework** – and start the school day with a sense of confidence and ability. As members complete homework assignments and bonus activities, they accumulate **Power Points**, which may be used to obtain Power Rewards – prizes, activities and incentives. In addition, Power Hour offers **tutoring assistance** for members who need additional work in special areas.

Power Hour is carefully structured to give Clubs several options for helping members achieve maximum success:

Homework Help and Tutoring. Two different tracks within Power Hour allow Clubs to provide the level of help members need most. In the homework assistance program, a supervisor oversees a large group of members who are working to complete their daily homework assignments. The program relies on staff members and volunteers – adults or older students from the community – to supervise homework completion and to keep track of members' progress. Some Clubs also may choose to recruit tutors to work with individual members on a one-to-one basis.

Opportunities for Continued Learning. The aim of Power Hour is to help members with homework completion, but the program also offers other learning experiences for those members who have finished their work for the day. When members have completed their homework assignments, they have a choice to do other activities within the Club, or to continue their learning – and earn more points – through leisure reading, completing worksheets or engaging in high-yield learning activities.

Power Hour and Project Learn

Volunteer or Mandatory Participation. Clubs have a choice of running the program as mandatory (all participating members are required to work on their homework for a designated period of time) or volunteer (members may take advantage of the program's offerings on an as-needed basis, with staff actively encouraging members to participate). Whether your Power Hour program is conducted on a mandatory or volunteer basis, it should be so engaging and fun that members will want to attend.

Project Learn, Boys & Girls Clubs of America's comprehensive educational enhancement strategy, develops members' knowledge and skills by integrating **fun,**

educational activities throughout the Club. Developed in the early 90's, Project Learn was formally evaluated in 1998, and the study revealed significant increases in grade point averages among program participants. Building on this success, B&GCA launched Project Learn nationally in 1999.

Project Learn **extends education from the school to the Club.** Because young people learn throughout the day – both in and out of the classroom – Project Learn is specifically designed to encourage members' continued learning while they are at the Club. In addition, Project Learn expands learning from the learning center throughout the Club itself. Through programming and mentoring, a Project Learn Club creates an environment that **builds on strengths, fosters independent learning and encourages discovery** among Club members. In addition, Project Learn supports the efforts of school districts by offering fun, after-school activities designed to ensure that students are achieving at the level of the **challenging educational standards.**

The Project Learn strategy comprises five components: 1) homework help and tutoring; 2) high-yield learning activities; 3) parental involvement; 4) collaboration with schools and 5) recognition and incentives. These strategies work together to support Club members in reaching their full potential – by helping them become proficient in basic academic skills, teaching them to make informed decisions about post-secondary education and encouraging them to become lifelong learners.

Power Hour is an essential element of any successful Project Learn strategy. By encouraging members to develop the **daily habit** of completing homework and study in a quiet, dedicated space with adult support, Power Hour helps members make a **commitment to school and learning.** Studies have shown that consistent homework completion is critical to success in school. By dedicating significant Club resources to Power Hour, your Club is sending a clear message – to Club members, parents and teachers – that the Club values and honors academic success.

For more information on Project Learn, consult the Project Learn Resource Guide. Information on school standards is available in a new publication, *Understanding School Standards: A Project Learn Publication on Linking Club Programs to Academic Standards.* To place an order, contact National Supply Service at 404-487-5701 or supplyservice@bgca.org.

Program Outcome Model

The following Program Outcome Model is designed to help Clubs see the big picture when implementing a Power Hour program. Program directors and staff can use the model

to evaluate and improve program services on a continuing basis. Clubs may want to review the Project Learn Outcome Model (included at the end of this Guide) to better understand how Power Hour relates to the Project Learn strategy.

Inputs	Program Activities	Program Outputs	Outcomes for Members	Outcomes for Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Staff members ✦ Dedicated learning space ✦ Power Hour resources (i.e., computers, books, magazines, tables, chairs, software) ✦ Incentive rewards ✦ Funding ✦ Volunteer hours ✦ Power Hour Resource Guide, posters, and supplemental forms ✦ Power Hour training ✦ Professional development for all Club staff ✦ Ongoing technical assistance from B&GCA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Daily homework help program ✦ One-on-one tutoring relationships ✦ Comprehensive recognition and incentive strategy ✦ Collaboration with teachers and schools ✦ Parent Involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Attendance of members in homework help sessions ✦ Number of tutoring relationships developed ✦ Number of program volunteers ✦ Attendance of parents ✦ Number of teachers or schools involved in program ✦ Number of recognition events ✦ Funds leveraged for program 	<p>Initial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Club members spend more time studying. ✦ Club members complete and turn in more homework assignments. ✦ Club members have fun learning. <p>Intermediate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Club members' grades improve. ✦ Club members become confident learners. ✦ Club members demonstrate organization and time management skills. ✦ Club members complete assignments without material rewards. <p>Long-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Club members are intrinsically motivated, lifelong learners. ✦ Club members graduate from high school and make good post-secondary school choices. ✦ Club members are proficient in basic academic disciplines. 	<p>Initial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Staff understands the importance of homework completion. ✦ Staff increases the amount of time they discuss homework with members. ✦ Staff asks members about homework every day. ✦ Staff checks completed homework. <p>Intermediate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Staff throughout building supports members on homework completion. ✦ Staff has a deeper understanding of members' academic needs. <p>Long-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Club is a place where everyone values and supports education. ✦ Staff establishes and maintains relationships with key community stakeholders to sustain Club goals.

Overview of the Resource Guide

The materials needed for Power Hour include: the **Resource Guide**; a **Power Poster** for tracking each member's progress on a shared bulletin board; and **Supplemental**

Forms for record-keeping, communication and fund-raising. (Access the supplemental forms by visiting the B&GCA Web site at www.bgca.net. Go to the program page, and click on *Power Hour*.)

The Resource Guide is organized into eight sections:

Introduction – a broad overview of Power Hour, including program goals and objectives, implementation strategies and a Program Outcome Model;

Program Components – details of program components and the purpose of each;

Starting a Power Hour Program – advice for starting a Power Hour program, including recruitment of members and volunteers;

Implementing a Power Hour Program – a detailed guide for running the program;

Working With Teens – a separate section devoted to the special needs of members in grades 6 to 12;

About Tutoring – a closer look at the use of one-on-one tutors;

Homework – Additional Information – an overview of challenges to homework completion faced by young people, plus a summary of best practices of after-school homework assistance programs;

Resources – a listing of Internet resources, books and other publications to help you make your Power Hour program a success.

Program Philosophy and Purpose

Power Hour offers a structured time and place for Club staff and volunteers to help members with an important aspect of the educational process – **home-**

work. Members emerge from the program **better prepared for classes and proud of their hard work and accomplishments**.¹

The philosophy underlying the Power Hour program is that the benefits of homework are threefold – academic, behavioral and social. By working on homework after school, members reinforce skills and concepts learned that day. Young people who consistently complete their homework develop a deeper understanding of the work, and are ready to move on to more challenging concepts.² In addition, homework completion leads to **long-term improvements** in members' grades and test scores.

Beyond the academic benefit, consistent homework completion helps young people develop **valuable organizational skills** – including time management, prioritization and task completion.³ These skills not only are necessary for achievement in school but also are a foundation for a successful life. In addition, young people who have their homework completed enter the classroom **confident and fully prepared** to engage in the activities of the school day.⁴

Power Hour enables Clubs to provide **extra attention** and **focused assistance** to at-risk members and those in need of motivation and direction. With the proper guidance and support, every Club member has the chance to develop **self-directed learning skills** and to be successful in school.

Club staff and volunteers who help members with their homework are the heart of the program and the key to its success. Ask successful adults to whom they credit their success, and many cite the names of mentors who inspired them at a critical time. Mentors can be parents or older siblings; often they are teachers or other members of the community.

Power Hour also operates on the belief that a child's progress depends upon **open communication** between the program staff and **parents**, and between staff and **classroom teachers**. A partnership among staff, parents and teachers helps to foster learning and provides an enriched support network for Club members enrolled in Power Hour.

The Benefits of Homework Completion

Research studies confirm that homework completion does make a difference in helping children and teens

become more confident, happy and successful in school.

A recent study of after-school homework assistance programs across the country revealed the following statistics about participating students and parents:⁵

- ✦ Eighty to 90 percent of parents surveyed believed that their children acquired **new skills** and became **more confident learners** as a result of the homework assistance program.
- ✦ Eighty-five percent said that, as a result of homework assistance programs, their children **enjoyed school more** and **improved their attendance**.
- ✦ Eighty to 90 percent said they were **less worried about their children's safety** after school when the children were involved in homework assistance programs.

- ✦ Seventy-five percent said the homework assistance program helped their children **get along better with family members**.
- ✦ Seventy-five percent of children surveyed said they learned that **hard work pays off**.
- ✦ Students participating in after-school programs were **less likely to start drinking**, and were **more likely to handle their anger in socially appropriate ways**.

Another study concluded that "17-year-olds who typically spent more than two hours daily doing homework had higher average reading scores than those who spent less than one hour per day on homework or those who did none."⁶

Florida Senator Victor Crist, who also works with the Friendship Hall after-school homework center in Tampa, estimates the savings generated by after-school assistance programs: "For every young person we can put into a positive, self-sustaining position, we can save over \$1 million in public assistance over their lifetime."⁷

The National Center for Education Statistics (U.S. Department of Education, 1999) looked specifically at mathematics performance as mediated by the presence of adult mentors. The study found overwhelmingly positive evidence of the importance of tutoring and mentoring programs:

Extended learning time and personal attention can improve a student's mathematical performance. High quality tutoring and mentoring programs can help students build conceptual understanding and strengthen their mathematics knowledge base by introducing or reinforcing key mathematical concepts.⁸

Program Objectives | Club Member Objectives

Power Hour is designed to help Club members achieve the following objectives:

- ✦ Become self-directed, resourceful and independent learners.
- ✦ Turn in their homework assignments completed and on time.
- ✦ Improve their organizational and time management skills.
- ✦ Improve their academic performance (classroom grades, test scores).
- ✦ Reinforce the lessons learned in school, and be better prepared for upcoming lessons.
- ✦ Develop a healthy attitude of personal responsibility, pride and a higher standard of diligence and rigor.⁹
- ✦ Understand the consequences of failing to meet obligations.
- ✦ Interact with each other in a positive, supportive manner.
- ✦ Avoid the risks competing for their after-school time and attention – crime, gangs and drugs.¹⁰

After participating in Power Hour, members of all ages are better able to **complete their assignments on their own**. They can take pride in the accomplishment of being prepared for class with **all homework finished and ready to turn in** and better equipped to learn the day's lessons.

Staff Member Responsibilities

The responsibilities for staff members involved in Power Hour are as follows:

On a Daily Basis Throughout the School Year

- ✦ Ask each member about his or her day at school.
- ✦ Ask each member if he or she has homework to do.
- ✦ Check to see if members turned in their homework from the previous day.
- ✦ Ask if members need help.
- ✦ Check members' homework.

Year-round

- ✦ Discuss high school graduation.
- ✦ Discuss colleges and career plans.
- ✦ Discuss subjects the member is having trouble with.
- ✦ Make referrals as needed.
- ✦ Encourage reading.



geography sciences reading comprehension geometry addition grammar spelling multiplication division problem solving synonyms antonyms nouns verbs critical thinking history reading comprehension sentence

01:00:00
00:59:30
00:52:16
00:48:56
00:45:22
00:39:00
00:33:40
00:30:36
00:26:20
00:22:07
00:19:30
00:17:22
00:14:04
00:13:08
00:10:53
00:08:50
00:07:07



Homework and Tutoring Help

Volunteers – Several dedicated adult or teen (peer) volunteers – along with Club staff – supervise the homework process.

Tutors – Tutors work one-on-one with members to address areas that need special attention or improvement.

Worksheets and Activities

Power Source – A collection of worksheets, activity pages and ideas for projects are gathered, organized and kept on hand for use by program participants.

Power Pages – Individual activity pages provide extra challenge for members after they have finished their homework assignments for the day.

High-yield Learning Activities – A diverse range of projects and experiences extends members' learning beyond the time they spend doing homework.

Incentives and Rewards

Power Points – Power Points are the “currency” of the program that members earn by completing homework and by taking part in other learning activities.

Power Rewards – Members may trade in their Power Points to win special rewards.

Record-Keeping

Check-in Sheet – A daily roster keeps track of members participating in sessions of Power Hour and also records what they accomplish during the session.

Master Tracker – A spreadsheet tracks each member's number of earned Power Points.

Power Recorder – A written record details members' contact information and observations about their performance in the program.

Power Poster – A poster is displayed on the wall of the Club to track members' performance in Power Hour as they earn more Power Points.

Quick Start Guide

If you are your Club's Power Hour Coordinator, this Quick Start Guide will give you an overview of everything you need to do to run the homework help component of the program.

- ✦ **Spread the word** about the program: Send notices home with members and meet with teachers.
- ✦ Set up a **learning center** in your Club and buy the necessary supplies.
- ✦ Create a **schedule** and share it with all Club staff.
- ✦ **Recruit members** into the program.
- ✦ Set up the **Power Poster** or a dedicated bulletin board to track members' progress as they gain **Power Points**.
- ✦ As members arrive, enter their names on the day's **Check-in Sheet**.
- ✦ Establish a **daily routine** to help members mentally prepare for what they need to accomplish. Routines could include taking a homework pledge, putting a sticker on the bulletin board, setting up the room or any other activity that signals the start of the Power Hour session.
- ✦ During each session of Power Hour, ask volunteers or staff to make sure that all members have the necessary **supplies** and are ready to begin.
- ✦ As members are working on their assignments, ask volunteers or staff to move around the room providing **help** where it is needed.
- ✦ As members complete assignments, ask volunteers or staff to review the homework for **completeness and accuracy**, and make notations on the day's Check-in Sheet. Members earn Power Points based on homework completed.
- ✦ Ask volunteers or staff to note any **behavioral problems** with members on the reverse side of the Check-in Sheet.
- ✦ If a member finishes early, give him or her the opportunity to earn additional Power Points by completing activities from the **Power Source**, or by engaging in one of many possible **high-yield learning activities**.
- ✦ After the session, transfer the number of accumulated Power Points into the **Master Tracker** on the Club's computer, using Excel or a similar program.

- ✦ Review the back of the Check-in Sheet, and transfer any notes about behavior, difficulties or breakthroughs to the respective members' files in the **Power Recorder**.
- ✦ Once a week, **update** the Power Poster or bulletin board to reflect members' new level of Power Points.
- ✦ When members reach goals, allow them to trade in their Power Points for **Power Rewards**. Encourage members to set new, higher goals at this time.
- ✦ When necessary, meet with **parents or guardians and teachers** to share information on members' progress.
- ✦ At least twice a year – before the winter and summer breaks – hold **ceremonies** to recognize the achievement of members and the dedication of volunteers.

Homework and Tutoring Help

Volunteers

To run the Power Hour program, you need at least

one dedicated staff member and several volunteers to supervise the homework sessions.

Some programs need only one staff member to supervise the entire group, and other programs may be more successful with the help of volunteers. There are many sources for volunteers throughout the community: professional educators, high school students, college students, members of a fraternity or sorority, parents, grandparents, retirees or anyone else committed to helping young people succeed.

Volunteers help keep track of each member's progress and accomplishments. They also serve as **role models**, providing guidance not only with the homework assignments, but also with organizational and critical thinking skills. Perhaps most importantly, volunteers inspire and encourage members.

Because volunteers are so critical to the success of your program, it is important to find ways to praise, reward and celebrate them in public ceremonies, with words of thanks and perhaps a tangible recognition such as a certificate.

Powerful Ideas

There are many ways to acknowledge and celebrate the contribution of volunteers.

Here are just a few ideas:

- ✦ If your Club has extra space on a wall, create a "Volunteer of the Month" feature to say thank you to committed volunteers.
- ✦ You might want to take photos of Volunteers of the Month, and the members with whom they work. Send these photos to your local paper, so the whole community can share in the acknowledgment.
- ✦ Invite members to participate in writing the Club newsletter, and ask them to highlight the volunteers in the Power Hour program.
- ✦ Some Clubs have used photographs of volunteers to make holiday greeting cards. Greeting cards can be sent on holidays, volunteers' birthdays or at any time as a simple thank-you card.



Tutors

Not every Club elects to implement the tutoring component of the Power Hour program. Clubs that do include a one-on-one tutoring component have a powerful tool for helping their members progress even further with educational achievement.¹¹

It is important to remember that staff members or volunteers in the Power Hour program are there to supervise the **everyday routine** of homework assistance, while **tutors** address **specific areas** that need improvement.

Because tutors work closely with specific members, a good match between tutor and member is critical. Tutors must be very good listeners and good communicators. Because it takes time for tutors and members to get to know each other and to work together well, **patience** is an important quality to look for in potential tutors.

Always remember that no two Clubs run the Power Hour program in exactly the same way. Your Club, for example, may choose to have tutors work with very small groups of two to five individuals at a time, instead of one tutor with one member.

Worksheets and Activities

Power Source

Power Source is a collection of **Power Pages** – worksheets, activity sheets and ideas for

projects. Some Clubs purchase a large assortment of worksheets from an **educational supply store**, while other Clubs prefer to collect worksheets from free sources such as Web sites. Many Clubs organize the collection of activities and worksheets by **grade level** into a series of boxes or binders.

Power Pages

In the Power Hour program, a **Power Page** is a one-page activity that members can complete to earn Power Points. Although Power Pages are not directly linked to homework assignments, many members enjoy the challenge of worksheets and the additional opportunity to build their skills.

Worksheets and other materials suitable for Power Pages can be obtained from area schools, educational supply stores or downloaded free from the Internet from a variety of Web sites that offer worksheets for all grade levels, in all subject areas. (In the “Resources” section of this guide, you will find sources for these extra materials.)

Powerful Idea

Work on your Club’s Power Source over the summer and develop a varied collection of interesting, fun Power Pages for the start of the school year. If summertime is too hectic, collect ideas throughout the year or during “down time” at your Club.



High-yield Learning Activities

In addition to Power Pages, members also can engage in a broad array of high-yield learning activities once they have finished their homework assignments for the day. The goal is to create a range of creative learning experiences to supplement the time members spend doing homework. The concept of high-yield learning activities is at the very heart of Project Learn.

The well-documented success of Project Learn reveals that **fun, but academically beneficial activities** increase scholastic performance. These activities include leisure reading, writing activities and games like chess or *Scrabble*® that develop young people’s cognitive skills.

A high-yield learning activity is one in which young learners utilize skills, information, behavior and values needed for successful completion of homework. These activities enable members to focus on the process, take on leadership roles and utilize developmentally appropriate words, sentences, ideas and problem-solving strategies. Most importantly, high-yield learning activities are **fun**. They are inherently motivating to members and provide incentives for them to explore, develop, create and learn.

These activities can take place throughout the entire Club – in the learning center, in the computer room, on the basketball court, in the kitchen – any location becomes a place where members can engage in exciting activities.

The following are some suggestions for high-yield learning activities. You may choose to record these ideas – one to a page – and insert them in the Power Source binder. Remember that participation in *any* of these activities during Power Hour will earn members Power Points.

High-yield Learning Activity Ideas

- ✦ Complete a crossword puzzle.
- ✦ Do logic problems, lateral thinking puzzles or other word problems.
- ✦ Play other games that use cognitive skills (such as chess, *Monopoly*®, *Scrabble*®, *SIM City*™, *The Oregon Trail*®, word search, *Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?*®, *Hooked on Phonics*®, or *Amazing Animal Trivia Game*).
- ✦ Complete tangrams and other spatial puzzles and activities.
- ✦ Read a book (brought from home or from the Club's library) or read to another person.
- ✦ Write a letter to the editor of a newspaper or magazine.
- ✦ Write a letter to a friend.
- ✦ Write a short play or skit or rap or music lyrics.
- ✦ Complete writing activities (such as newspaper publishing clubs, SMART Girls journal writing, e-mailing, writing to pen pals or writing poetry).
- ✦ Work on a science project.
- ✦ Create a comic book.
- ✦ Work on a Power Hour newsletter for the Club.

Developing high-yield learning activities takes a bit of creativity and time, but can be any experience that encourages members to **explore, develop, create and learn.**

Be sure to award points to members for all the different high-yield learning activities they complete during Power Hour.

Incentives and Rewards

Power Points

Every member participating in Power Hour has the opportunity

to accumulate Power Points by successfully completing homework assignments. These Points are a form of **currency** – members can trade them in for prizes or special rewards.

You can determine a system for earning Power Points that is right for your members and that reinforces your Club's ongoing goals. At one club, members receive one Power Point for arriving at the session on time, and the completion of each assignment merits five Power Points. Especially large homework assignments – science fair projects, long book reports or research projects – merit a bonus of 10 to 25 additional points. Members should be encouraged to save their points for large rewards.

If members finish their homework early, they can choose a Power Page from the Power Source binder or one of many high-yield learning activities available to them. Members earn additional points by completing these extra assignments.

Each member's Power Points are tallied in the Power Recorder and are tracked also on the Power Poster on display.

Powerful Ideas

You may want to check out the Activity Exchange at www.bgca.net, a source of "tried and true" activities that have been submitted by Boys & Girls Clubs throughout the Movement. If your Club has a good activity or program, consider submitting it to the Activity Exchange.



A simple way to award Power Points for attendance is to give members a point for each day they attend the program. Or, you may choose instead to award a larger Power Reward to all members who manage to maintain 75 percent or better attendance over a period of several weeks or months.

Awarding Power Points

The following is one example of how Power Points might be awarded to members. Each Club should develop its own method, however, and make sure that all staff and volunteers fully understand the point system. It also is important for members to know how many points are earned by the various activities.

Because Power Points are meant to be **motivational, creating excitement** and increased effort as members work toward goals and prizes, members must understand the system so they can earn their points rather than receive them arbitrarily.

Activity	Points
✦ Arriving on time for Power Hour session	1
✦ Finishing each homework assignment	3
✦ Completing a long-term project (i.e., a research paper or any other assignment that takes one to three weeks to complete)	15
✦ Completing a Power Page	2
✦ Reading for 20 minutes	2
✦ Writing for 20 minutes (i.e., a letter to a friend, an article for the newsletter, rap or music lyrics)	2
✦ Helping a younger member with his or her homework	4
✦ Playing an educational board game or computer game	2

Powerful Ideas



Some Clubs have come up with imaginative ways of awarding Power Points. Although each is different, they all amount to the same idea – providing incentives for members to attend the session and complete their homework assignments.

- ✦ One Club gives each member a passport with 44 squares. Members receive stamps for attending Power Hour and for completing all homework. If a member earns 32 stamps within 11 weeks, he or she wins a prize. There is also space in the passport for Club staff to record comments about the member's strengths and talents.
- ✦ Another Club requires members to attend the program for a set number of days per month (for example, 15 days each month) in order to qualify for a prize. Points are tracked using a special Power Hour card created and duplicated at the Club.
- ✦ Some Clubs, in addition to using a system of Power Points, gives additional prizes to the top performers. The top three, five or ten members – in terms of number of Power Points earned – receive extra prizes and rewards.
- ✦ One Club gives small daily prizes to three members judged by staff to have worked the hardest on a given day.
- ✦ Another Club writes the number of Power Points on a sheet that the member is responsible for carrying around and bringing to Power Hour sessions. As members receive points, the supervisor writes the number on their sheets, along with his or her signature. At the end of the week, members turn in their sheets and the Points are transferred to the Power Poster. This approach teaches responsibility – if members lose their sheets, it is like losing money.
- ✦ Many Clubs never take away Power Points from members. But some Clubs find it very useful to subtract points from members who are being especially difficult. Since members know losing points is a possible consequence, this approach becomes a motivation to behave. The consequence of losing points should be used only occasionally in a Power Hour program, but it can be a powerful tool when needed.
- ✦ One Club creates a goal and tracks all points collected on a giant thermometer. If the Club reaches the goal, there is a Club-wide Power Hour party.

Power Rewards

As the Power Hour Coordinator, you must remember that homework is not usually a lot of fun for young people. Power Points and Power Rewards are designed to entice members to **try their best** in order to **win great prizes**. A job well done may be its own reward, and many members will be inspired to try their best based on motivators such as personal pride, accomplishment, satisfaction, growth and excellence. Most members will be thrilled to arrive at school with all their homework done, earning better grades, more praise from teachers and parents and freedom from anxiety.

Power Rewards are not intended to replace feelings of accomplishment, personal progress or other internal motivations. They are simply incentives to make the experience even more enjoyable. For this reason, rewards are important to the success of the program and the academic success of your members.

Reward Categories

Clubs can offer any type of reward they deem appropriate for the program. Feel free to make up your own point system and think of the rewards and incentives that would most inspire your members to work hard on their homework. In general, Power Points can be exchanged for several different categories of rewards:

1. **Free time** to be spent enjoying the Club's resources (i.e., free time surfing the Web or playing computer games);
2. An **individual prize**, which could be education-related (pens and rulers) or more fun, depending on donations you are able to acquire (a ticket to a local movie theater, etc.);
3. A **monthly group activity** such as a pizza party;
4. A **big group activity** or field trip, offered only once or twice each year, such as a trip to a zoo, water park or ball game.

Powerful Ideas



Small wonders. In addition to the top awards like trips or parties, remember also to keep on hand some small prizes. Some Clubs, for example, maintain a “prize cabinet” with pens and pencils, small puzzles, erasers, simple toys and other similar items suitable for rewarding a day's solid effort.

Top scorers. Some Clubs give special rewards only to the members with the highest number of Power Points (for example, the top ten).

Give them what they want. Some Power Hour coordinators take a few members with them when shopping for prizes for the program. This is a good way to make sure members are getting the types of rewards they really appreciate.

Power Hour weekly raffle. One Club gives members a raffle ticket for each day they attend Power Hour and finish their homework, and on Friday, the prizes are raffled off. This can be an excellent incentive to encourage members to attend Power Hour every single day. If they do so, they will have four chances to win. This Club has all its Power Hour prizes donated by parents and local businesses in the community.

Power Hour store. Some Clubs keep a “Power Hour Store.” This is a place where members can “spend” their Power Points to purchase pens, rulers, markers, books or educational toys. You may choose to purchase items for the Power Hour Store with money from the Club budget, or you might arrange to have items donated from parents and members of the community.

Reward Events

Once a month, it is a good idea to offer a special reward event for all members who have reached a given number of Power Points. Twice a year (before winter and summer breaks, for example), you may want to offer a **larger reward event** for members who have reached an even greater total of Power Points. Here are a few ideas for reward events:

- ✦ A pizza party;
- ✦ A field trip to a zoo or aquarium;
- ✦ A field trip to a water park or theme park;
- ✦ A make-your-own-sundae party;
- ✦ A scavenger hunt;
- ✦ An Olympics day of track and field events;
- ✦ College tours for teen members;
- ✦ A day at the beach;
- ✦ A picnic;
- ✦ Educational field trips to a fire station or local museum;
- ✦ A movie, bowling and dinner all in one night: "The Royal Treatment."

Record-Keeping

The Power Hour program offers four possible ways to keep records of member's attendance, progress and achievement. Each day as members arrive, their names are entered on a daily Check-in Sheet. At the end of the day, information about Power Points earned is transferred to a Master Tracker spreadsheet (using Excel or another spreadsheet program). At the same time, observations about members' performance are transferred to a hand-written permanent record called the Power Recorder. Finally, on public display on a wall of the Club is a Power Poster (included with this Resource Guide) or bulletin board, a record of each member's number of Power Points for all to see.

Clubs can access the "Check-in Sheet," "Master Tracker" and "Power Recorder" by visiting the B&GCA Web site at www.bgca.net. Go to the program page, and click on *Power Hour* to find the appropriate forms.

Check-in Sheet

The Check-in Sheet is a great tool for keeping track of each member's daily accomplishments, including homework assignments, Power Pages and high-yield learning experiences completed and the number of Power Points earned.

Here are the steps involved in using the Check-in Sheet:

1. **Download a Copy** of the Check-in Sheet from the Web site and make photocopies of the form, or print out a number of sheets. You will need at least one sheet for every day of Power Hour, but if you are running more than one session of Power Hour per day (different age groups, for example), you will need one sheet for each session.
2. **Write the Date** at the top of the sheet.
3. **Record the Names** of members who arrive at the start of a session. (If consistent with your Club's policies, you may also want to record the member's Club ID number.)
4. **Tally the Activities** completed at the end of the session. Beside each member's name, write a tally of the homework assignments that member completes. In the next column, record any high-yield learning activities or Power Pages the member does after his or her homework is completed.
5. **Record Power Points** earned. In the final column, write a tally of the total number of Power Points that member has earned for the day.
6. **Write Comments** on the back of the Check-in Sheet. An extra column at the left has numbers corresponding to each member's name. The numbers are used to write notes – on the *back* of the Check-in Sheet – about a member's performance that day. To ensure confidentiality, it is important that the *numbers* be used, instead of the members' names. Any special breakthroughs by members, behavior problems or areas of special difficulty or concern are recorded in this way.

Clubs should retain all Check-in Sheets and store them in a binder or folder. If members have questions about the points they earned on a particular day, there will be a written record of the points they were awarded during any given session.

Master Tracker

The Master Tracker is an Excel spreadsheet that enables Clubs to keep a running tally (by day) of member's Power Points. You can download the form from the Web site, or create your own tracking spreadsheet. Whatever you use must have space for the names of members, the dates they attend Power Hour, and the number of Power Points they earn during each session. The spreadsheet also should automatically add up each member's Power Points to provide a running tally, as well as a running total of the number of Power Points earned by all members as a whole.

At the end of each session, the tally of Power Points from the Check-in Sheet is transferred to the corresponding cells in the Master Tracker, using the Club's computer.

Power Recorder

The Power Recorder is a binder containing records for all members participating in the Power Hour program. Because it contains **sensitive, private information**, the binder should be stored somewhere out of the reach of members.

The Power Recorder should contain **contact information** for the parents or guardians of all members, and also for all Club staff and volunteers. A file for each member should detail the name of his or her school, parent or guardian, teacher, tutor (if applicable), and all pertinent phone numbers and addresses.

The binder is the place to keep a **permanent record** of each member's progress and behavior. At the end of each day, any comments or observations written on the back of the Check-in Sheet are transferred to the appropriate member's file in the Power Recorder.

Power Poster

The Power Poster (included with this Resource Guide) is for display on the wall of your Club, and can be used to **track the Power Point scores** of all your members.

Instead of the Power Poster, some Clubs may prefer to use a bulletin board with a colorful theme related to current Club activities. The bulletin board can be decorated with cut-outs and other designs. If the selected theme is about space travel, for example, you might assign the various planets different point values, and have each member represented by a space ship that moves upward toward the planets as the member earns more and more Power Points.

You might also choose to decorate the bulletin board by emphasizing the Power Rewards at different Power Point levels. For example, if 50 points earns members a toy, you could place a drawing of the toy at the 50-point level – helping members visualize this goal as they gain more Power Points.

Clubs should feel free to substitute another system, if desired. For Clubs that strive to minimize the degree of competition in the lives of their members, for example, the tracking of points may be in conflict with Club philosophy. For these Clubs, another system may be more appropriate – one that celebrates members' participation in a program that seeks to brighten their academic future.



geography sciences reading comprehension geometry addition grammar spelling multiplication division problem solving synonyms antonyms nouns verbs critical thinking history reading comprehension sentence

01:00:00
00:59:30
00:52:16
00:48:56
00:45:22
00:39:00
00:33:40
00:30:36
00:26:20
00:22:07
00:19:30
00:17:22
00:14:04
00:13:08
00:10:53
00:08:50



Many Clubs already run Power Hour or a similar homework assistance program, but if your Club is starting one for the first time, here are the steps for getting started.

Voluntary vs. Mandatory Programs

Clubs have the choice to run Power Hour as a **voluntary program** or as a mandatory program. Before you begin

your Power Hour program, it is necessary to decide which approach is right for your Club members. There are advantages and disadvantages to consider for both the voluntary and the mandatory approach.

Pros and Cons of a Voluntary Program

Making Power Hour voluntary means offering homework assistance after school each day (or, in most Clubs, Monday through Thursday), **allowing members a choice** about whether to take advantage of this service. If they come to the session, they are required to spend that time working on homework. If they would rather engage in other activities, or skip a day or do their homework at home on their own, they have the choice to do so. Although voluntary programs give members a choice about whether or not to attend, staff play a vital role in encouraging members to participate. Once members become involved, they still need encouragement from staff to attend on a regular basis, complete homework assignments and value academic achievement.

A voluntary Power Hour program affords a great deal of **flexibility** to members, staff and volunteers. The very members who benefit most from a homework assistance program are the same ones who struggle with the daily, mandatory, highly structured environment of school. Because a voluntary program is inherently different from the classroom, it has a greater chance of attracting the members who most need help.

Pros – The advantages of a voluntary program include the following:

- ✦ Members learn to allocate their time in a way that builds responsibility, because they can choose how much time to spend on homework each day.
- ✦ Members have the flexibility to make thoughtful decisions about their days and their own needs.
- ✦ Those members who *do* show up have made a choice to be there.

Cons – The disadvantages of a voluntary program include:

- ✦ The goal of the program is increased homework completion, and a voluntary approach does not guarantee completed assignments.
- ✦ Members who avoid homework might very well continue to do so.
- ✦ Younger children, especially, are not equipped to make sound decisions about scheduling their own commitments.

Pros and Cons of a Mandatory Program

A mandatory homework program usually requires that **all members** complete one full hour of homework a day before they can take part in **any** other Club activities. In most cases, members are required to attend four days a week, with no Power Hour on Fridays. (Clubs can offer Power Hour on Fridays if they choose to do so.)

Pros – Mandatory programs offer the following advantages:

- ✦ Members who are easily distracted or especially reluctant to do their homework might find it much easier to sit down and focus on homework if all of their peers are doing so, too.
- ✦ Members who are concerned that they will not look “cool” if they are doing homework can easily save face by explaining that they *have* to attend the program.
- ✦ With a mandatory program, there is no need to ask members if they have completed their homework during the rest of the day.
- ✦ Clubs with limited resources of staff and/or space might find it helpful to have all members in one place at one time.
- ✦ A mandatory program allows Clubs to use all staff in the building to help with the program, reducing the need for volunteers.

Cons – The disadvantages of a mandatory program are as follows:

- ✦ Members might begin to arrive after the homework period is completed if they know that they must do homework during that specific time.
- ✦ Members have no choice about when to do their homework – some members may be more comfortable getting it out of the way right away, but others need time to unwind and chat with friends before they begin.
- ✦ Members who do not have any homework still must sit and work quietly.
- ✦ Because there is usually great resistance toward homework, a mandatory program sometimes can raise serious concerns about behavior management.

General Recommendations

Both methods of administering the Power Hour program can be highly effective, and the choice depends on your

particular Club’s needs. Whichever approach you choose, here are some recommendations to get the most out of your program:

- ✦ Offer a **snack** to all members when they first arrive. Snacks are a great energy-booster, especially in the late afternoon. A snack also separates the time between school and homework, so members feel like they have a break before they have to get down to business. It is a good idea to offer something nutritious, like seedless grapes, in small portions.
- ✦ Draw up **homework help contracts** between parent, member and Club (a sample contract can be downloaded from the Power Hour page of the Web site). Some Clubs like to have the staff member or volunteer who acts as the supervisor of sessions, or the tutor if there is one, also sign the contract. These contracts commit members to taking part in the program for a set number of days per week. Members are obliged to attend, but the commitment is one they have made with their families.
- ✦ Hire or recruit as **many volunteers and tutors as possible**. Having more staff on hand allows you to break up the large group into smaller groups. Volunteers can help make the hour better serve the specific needs of a small group of members, and they can give more personalized attention to those who need it.
- ✦ Make sure the entire staff agrees to and **supports** the approach you decide to take. Involve as many Club staff in the implementation of Power Hour as possible, and remember that homework can be done in the gym, games room or art center. Work with other staff members to make sure your colleagues understand the point system and know how to track all members’ points on the Check-in Sheets.
- ✦ Whether you run a mandatory or a voluntary program, do not forget that there will be members who slip through the cracks. Remember that they are the ones who need help most, so be sure to do whatever you can to recruit **hard-to-reach** youth into the program.
- ✦ Make sure that staff members consistently emphasize the **importance** of education and homework completion.

Attracting Members

Whether you are currently running a Power Hour program at your Club or not, attracting members is an **ongoing job**. The best place to look for members to participate is within the Club itself. You can ask your Unit Director, Education Director and any Club staff if they know of particular members who would benefit from extra homework help. You can then personally ask or encourage those members to participate.

One way to spread the word within the Club is to set aside time at every staff meeting to give a Power Hour update. Ask all of your staff to mention Power Hour at the beginning and the end of all of your **other Club activities** – including sports, community service and other programs.

You may want to also post flyers for Power Hour on the Club's bulletin board. Once members begin signing up for Power Hour, ask them to tell their friends about the program. Let members know that an exciting new opportunity is available that will help them eliminate some of the hassles of homework. You may want to mention some of the specific benefits to members: improved grades and test scores, the chance to work among friends and the opportunity to earn prizes and rewards. It is also a good idea to create a recruitment team made up of Club members. **Older members** can be great influences to attract younger members to the program.

It is important also to avoid scheduling a very popular Club activity at the same time as Power Hour. On the other hand, you can provide additional incentive for members to attend Power Hour by scheduling extremely popular activities **immediately after** Power Hour.

Recruiting Volunteers

Nearly every study of homework intervention conducted in recent years has singled out **the presence of skilled, patient, dedicated adults as the most important influence** on a child's academic performance. Students who have mentoring help from adults have subsequent improvements in academic achievement, measured by classroom grades, standardized tests and percentage of homework completed.¹² Volunteers who serve as mentors are like training wheels: over time, members are able to **internalize** the support they have received from caring adults.

What to Look for in Potential Volunteers

Some studies have found that **educators** (i.e., classroom teachers) make the best homework helpers. But positive results also are possible with older students (i.e., high school students), college students, parents, grandparents and other members of the community. The most important considerations are that volunteers be:

- ✦ Excellent role models;
- ✦ Dedicated and willing to commit for a certain period of time;
- ✦ Patient;
- ✦ Passionate about helping;
- ✦ Organized and able to keep detailed notes and progress reports;
- ✦ Sensitive to the varying individual needs of members of different ages, backgrounds and capabilities;
- ✦ Bilingual, when appropriate for a given program's population.

Where to Look for Potential Volunteers

There are many resources for locating potential volunteers for the program:

- ✦ Responsible, high-achieving high school students – ask principals and school counselors for recommendations;
- ✦ Service organizations in high schools – Key Club, Future Business Leaders of America, etc.;
- ✦ Churches, synagogues, or other faith-based organizations;
- ✦ Community organizations such as the Rotary Club or Elks – attend their meetings and see if you can arrange to speak at one of their gatherings;
- ✦ Retirement communities;
- ✦ College fraternities and sororities, Schools of Education, work-study offices – have flyers handy to leave on bulletin boards;
- ✦ Local colleges and universities – speak to someone in the career counseling office or in the department of education;
- ✦ Parents, older siblings, grandparents and other relatives of Club members;
- ✦ Substitute teachers in the area – school principals and teacher unions will have available lists;
- ✦ People who work in professions with non-traditional hours.

The experience of several successful Power Hour Coordinators has shown that **teen members** make excellent tutors, but only when they are mature enough to be seen as “junior staff.” When you are recruiting teen volunteers and creating a schedule, be sure to think about whether the teens you are considering will provide positive support to younger Club members. In addition, be sure to provide teen volunteers with appropriate orientation and training so that they can succeed.

How to Interview and Assess Potential Volunteers

Interviewing volunteers is an important step in assessing their potential as effective helpers for the Power Hour program. Here is a list of steps to follow in considering individuals to be volunteers:

- ✦ Talk to potential volunteers about the **time commitment**. They must be able to commit to a minimum schedule and be willing to sign the “Homework Help Contract” with the Club, members and parents (a sample contract can be downloaded from the Power Hour page of the Web site).
- ✦ Ask about **previous experience**. Make special note of the ages of children potential volunteers have experience serving. In building a schedule, try to match volunteers with children of these age groups.
- ✦ Problem-solve and brainstorm aloud various hypothetical situations, such as what to do with members who are always tardy, sleepy, disruptive, hungry, apathetic, combative, etc. See how well the potential volunteers are able to come up with **positive solutions**.
- ✦ Ask prospects about their **reasons** for wanting to take part in the program.
- ✦ Review with prospects your **organizational policies** about interactions between volunteers and staff and between volunteers and youth.
- ✦ Tell all volunteers that they will be required to have a **background check** completed.
- ✦ Use the “Volunteer Interview Questions” (a list of the questions can be downloaded from the Power Hour page of the Web site) to find out more about volunteers’ experience, areas of expertise and commitment. Questions to ask include the following:
 - ◆ *Why would you like to become a volunteer?*
 - ◆ *Once you are a volunteer, will you be able to commit to the entire school year? If not, what kind of time commitment are you able to make?*
 - ◆ *What other time commitments do you have on weekdays in the late afternoon?*
 - ◆ *What do you feel you can offer young people in a homework assistance program?*
 - ◆ *What benefit do you hope to gain from being a part of this program?*
 - ◆ *What languages do you speak fluently?*
 - ◆ *Do you have any experience in working with young children?*
 - ◆ *If so, what kind of experience, and with what age groups?*
 - ◆ *Do you have any special areas of expertise (math, science, Spanish, etc.)?*



Volunteers, Tutors and Safety

In order to protect members, volunteers, tutors and the Club, some basic safety precautions need to be taken:

- ✦ Every volunteer, including all tutors, must be screened through the screening process in place at your Organization or Unit.
- ✦ Volunteers and tutors may never be left alone, one-on-one, with a member. Other members or staff must be present at all times.



Bilingual Volunteers and Tutors

Many populations served by after-school programs have a large number of families for whom English is not the first language. Some homework help and tutoring programs have tried to better serve these families by pairing members with bilingual volunteers and tutors. Such volunteers are useful not only in overcoming communication barriers, but also in enhancing the cultural diversity of your Club membership and your community.¹³

Communication and Outreach

Communicating With Parents

Communication with parents is an important element of the

Power Hour program. **Write a letter** (a sample parent letter can be downloaded from the Power Hour page of the Web site), and customize it with the name of your Club, your town and other important information. You can send copies of this letter to the parents and guardians of all Club members, either through the mail, or by sending copies home with members. Remember to translate these mailings into the language most comfortable for the parents of your members, if necessary.

You may want to also send a staff member to make special appearances at **PTA meetings** at area schools – letting parents know that a homework help program exists in their community.

Another good idea is to host a **Power Hour Open House** at the Club, to let parents know what the program involves. You might even use the learning center to host adult/parent programs (GED, ESL, Adult Ed, job training) – another opportunity to include parents in the Club.

For more ideas on involving parents, please refer to the Project Learn Resource Guide. Contact National Supply Service to place an order at (404) 487-5701 or supplyservice@bgca.org. Clubs also can access the “Letter to Parents” and “Homework Help Hints for Parents” (English and Spanish) by visiting the B&GCA Web site at www.bgca.net. Go to the program page, and click on *Power Hour* to find the appropriate forms.

Connecting With Schools

Much of the direction for Power Hour comes from the classroom, and the success of the program depends on Clubs connecting with local schools to share information and resources to better serve young people.

Establishing relationships with local schools takes time and persistence, but the rewards for your members make the effort worthwhile. **Teachers** can provide great insight into members’ needs, learning styles, assignments and attitude. They can tell you whether members are turning in their homework, and if there are specific needs of members that can be addressed through Power Hour. **Principals** can promote Power Hour, foster relationships with key school personnel and provide resources to enhance your program.

Below are several strategies for connecting with schools. Consult the Project Learn Resource Guide for more detailed information on this topic.

- ✦ **Write a letter** to schools (a sample letter to teachers can be downloaded from the Power Hour page of the Web site) to begin communicating with the educators in your area. Customize the letter with the name of your Club, town and the other pertinent information. To target the right individuals, call the school secretary to obtain a list of teachers in specific grades. Be sure to create a database of teachers for future correspondence.

- ✦ **Schedule an appointment** early in the school year with the principal from each school your members attend to introduce yourself and the Power Hour program. Bring promotional materials about Power Hour (and Project Learn brochures) and be prepared to share the benefits of your program. Ask the principal if you can introduce the Power Hour program at the next faculty or PTA meeting.
- ✦ **Post flyers** about the Club and Power Hour in teachers' mailboxes or faculty lounge.
- ✦ **Invite teachers and staff** at local schools to a Power Hour Open House. Have members create and deliver the invitations to the teachers and staff at their schools. Be sure to have the open house directly after school.
- ✦ **Be visible** at school events.
- ✦ **Ask the principal** for a set of textbooks (for each grade) to use at the Club.
- ✦ **Find out how to communicate** with teachers about homework assignments (i.e., have a mailbox where staff receives mail, be placed on an e-mail list).

Remember that teachers and principals are very busy, with rigid schedules. Be as flexible as you can. To build momentum, start with teachers and staff who are approachable about and interested in Clubs. It is best to schedule meetings with teachers and principals in the early morning during planning periods, or right when the school day ends.

For more ideas on collaborating with schools, please refer to the Project Learn Resource Guide. Contact National Supply Service to place an order at (404) 487-5701 or supplyservice@bgca.org. Clubs also can access the "Letter to Teacher or Principal" by visiting the B&GCA Web site at www.bgca.net. Go to the program page, and click on *Power Hour* to find the letter.

Spreading the Word About Power Hour

Sending **press releases** to the media is a great way to begin spreading the word about Power Hour in the community (a "Sample Press Release" can be downloaded from the Power Hour page of the Web site). Customize the press release by adding the name of your town, the name of your Club, the name of your Club's leader and/or the staff member overseeing the Power Hour program, the number of years your Club has been in existence, the mailing date and the date you expect the program to begin. You can mail or fax this press release to every news agency in your community – local papers, radio stations or television stations. Some Clubs even post copies of the press release on bulletin boards at supermarkets, department stores or other places people gather in the community.

Once you have sent the mailing, be sure to place **follow up calls** to the media. Make sure the appropriate editors received the press releases, and ask if they need any additional information about the program.

You can also use your Club's **Web site** or **newsletter** to spread the word about Power Hour.

Powerful Idea

Create an education Advisory Committee comprised of parents, educators, board members and community representatives. The committee can be a source of ideas and resources for your Club's education program, including Power Hour.



Materials Needed

The goal is for all young people to be **responsible for their own supplies**, and the Club should be viewed only as a back-up resource. However, members occasionally will arrive without the materials they need to complete a homework assignment, so your program should stock some basic materials. Most likely your Club already has on hand most of the supplies and

resources necessary for Power Hour – things like paper and pens. Other items needed for the program include:

- ✦ Power Source – a collection of Power Pages worksheets and other extra materials, useful when members finish their assignments early – organized by grade level;
- ✦ Power Recorder – a binder for keeping track of members’ progress;
- ✦ Pens and pencils, crayons, colored pencils, markers and chalk;
- ✦ Paper – blank white and lined notebook;
- ✦ Colored construction paper and poster board – for projects/presentations;
- ✦ Folders, spiral notebooks, post-it notes, index cards;
- ✦ Erasers;
- ✦ Rulers;
- ✦ Scissors – including safety scissors for younger children;
- ✦ Tape, glue and stapler;
- ✦ Rubber bands and paper clips;
- ✦ Magazines and newspapers;
- ✦ Dictionaries and encyclopedias;
- ✦ Globes and atlases;
- ✦ Computers and blank diskettes;
- ✦ Calculators, protractors, compasses – for advanced math work;
- ✦ Filing cabinet – for members to store completed work;
- ✦ Beads for counting;
- ✦ Flashcards (See sidebar for Power Hour flashcard ideas.).

In the “Resources” section of this guide, you will find lists of various free or low-cost sources for worksheets, skill development Web sites and other related materials to help you stock your learning center. If possible, it is also a good idea to speak with principals or librarians from area schools, to see if you can obtain a full set of **textbooks**, covering all grade levels served, in every subject. Try to get one student edition and one teacher edition of each book. **Remember to keep teacher editions out of members’ reach.**

Flashcards

Flashcards are a great way to help Club members reinforce academic skills while having fun. They can be used with a group or with one-on-one tutoring. Education supply stores sell all kinds of flashcards, but you can also make your own, tailored specifically for your Club members. Even better, have Club members make the flashcards they need.

Here is how to make flashcards:

- ✦ Buy packages of multicolored index cards.
- ✦ Select the topic and information you want to put on the cards. This information could be the weekly spelling or vocabulary words, addition or multiplication facts, words in a foreign language, etc.
- ✦ Write the question on one side of the card and the answer on the other. Do not use a pen with ink that is so dark it runs through to the other side of the card.
- ✦ When one set of cards is complete, it can be easily stored in a box with other sets of index cards. Make sure to keep sets separated with rubber bands.

Here is how to use flashcards:

- ✦ Remember, this is supposed to be fun, not stressful.
- ✦ Hold the cards and have the Club member guess the answer. If she answers correctly, put the card in a “correct” pile. If she answers incorrectly, put the card in a “redo” pile.
- ✦ When you have gone through all cards, go through the same process with the redo pile.
- ✦ Continue until each member has answered the card correctly.
- ✦ Redo the entire pile for review.
- ✦ Congratulate the Club member on success.

Alternate ways to use flashcards:

- ✦ Have members quiz each other.
- ✦ Use cards in a game-show or spelling-bee format.
- ✦ Have timed tests. Remember, the goal is not to create stress in members. If timing a member makes him anxious, avoid it. If it makes memorization fun, keep it up. Time the member and then see if he can beat his own time.
- ✦ Have Club members design their own cards in the art room.



Textbook Copies

To obtain copies of needed textbooks – both student and teacher editions – contact the national headquarters of the textbook publisher. Ask for the name and number of the local sales representative or educational consultant, and call that person directly to request copies. Textbook publishers typically give away hundreds of copies to school districts, and often do not mind donating a set to local youth development organizations.

Creating the Learning Center Space

As you create your Power Hour learning center, you will consider a number of factors such as design,

lighting, acoustics or furniture. Remember that the ultimate goal is the creation of a space **quiet enough to allow for serious homework study**, but also **stimulating enough to help members maintain energy and focus**.

Think about how the learning center space might feel to Club members: *Is the environment too noisy? Is it too crowded? Do members seem tired or hungry or anxious?* The physical layout of your learning center can greatly enhance the success of the program.

The Coordinators of successful Power Hour programs around the country have observed that many reading comprehension problems are eventually linked not to a learning disability or a problem of motivation, but to a simple matter of vision. To promote the best possible environment for reading, a homework assistance center should have **good lighting** from multiple sources. Whenever possible, use warmer tones rather than the cool-blue fluorescent fixtures. A direct, harsh light can cast distracting shadows and make it more difficult for members to stay focused.

Because different **chairs** work best for different children, the learning center should offer a variety of seating options. Some members may get restless in hard, straight-back chairs, while chairs or sofas that are too cozy might leave other children daydreaming. The choice of a chair may seem unimportant, but can make a world of difference. Consider other seating options as well. For example, as long as youth complete their work, sitting on a clean carpet should not be out of bounds.

If possible, also provide a variety of **working surfaces**. Some members do best in the social setting of a table, while others might need the separation and privacy afforded by study carrels.

For more ideas on learning centers, please refer to the Project Learn Resource Guide. Contact National Supply Service to place an order at (404) 487-5701 or supplyservice@bgca.org.

Powerful Ideas



Although homework space is referred to in this Resource Guide as the “learning center,” Clubs may choose another name. One Club, for example, calls its Power Hour room “The Brain Zone.” So be creative in naming your center or room!

Each Club also should feel free to decorate its learning center so that it feels like an exciting, fun and inspiring place. If your Club has an art department or art club, you may want to enlist its help in making decorations for the Power Hour room.



Planning and Designing Your Learning Center

A strong learning environment begins with the physical structure. The physical features of a room (colors, space, lighting, etc.) contribute to members' attitudes about learning. You might want to consider some of the following variables when designing your own Club's learning center:

Temperature – Temperature is considered to be the top distraction for effective learning. Spaces that are too hot or cold can have an adverse impact on the way youth learn. Although appropriate temperature varies for individual Club members and by geographical region, a general target temperature is 70 to 72 degrees Fahrenheit.

Lighting – Appropriate lighting provides for proper vision, including depth and perception. A learning center needs a high level of lighting (approximately 70- to 80- foot-candles). The tone of the light (warm/cool) is less important than the available amount. However, Clubs should always use daylight as much as possible; daylight is considered one of the most effective sources of warm light. The primary goal is to maintain a high level of alertness from a high level of lighting.

Acoustics – Where there are young people there will most likely be noise. Although sound level and foot traffic can be challenging in a learning environment, it can also convey a sense of fun, purpose and free activity. Sound should be managed and balanced, not eliminated. Carpeting, rugs, room dividers and heavy curtains are some of the methods you can use to limit and manage the noise level within the learning center. Rooms with ceilings more than 9 feet high, however, will need extra sound absorption on the ceiling and perhaps on the upper walls as well. Try to avoid jarring noises that tend to distract youth. Total silence, on the other hand, may be more distracting for some youth than a noisy room.

Design – A learning center should be visually exciting. Staff members should consider an unusual layout of the furnishings or display of materials to make the room interesting. If you are designing a room especially for teens, the learning center might convey a sense of "attitude," chaos or even rebelliousness. The space should convey the idea that "In this room we think differently, problem-solve differently and create or invent things. In here, we think 'outside the box.'"

Color – The skillful placement of colors in a room creates a certain feeling in the people inhabiting it. Warm colors (reds, yellows and oranges) are stimulating. Cool colors (greens, blues and purples) are calming. Consider using neutral colors (black, white, gray or brown) and including colorful accents. Limit the number of colors you use and pay attention to the level of contrast between them. Be careful when choosing colors – bright colors can over-stimulate some children and be as harmful to the learning process as a dreary room. Use spots of color for occasional visual relief rather than blanketing the entire room with too much color.

Furniture – Young people are most comfortable when a learning area feels like a home away from home. This is not only relaxing, but also makes them feel like they have entered a welcoming environment that is different from a long day at school. Using beanbags, sofas, stuffed chairs, futons, lamps, rugs, tables and desks helps members establish a readiness to learn. The learning center also should have age-appropriate tables and chairs. Be sure to include both "hard" areas (desks, chairs and tables) and "soft" areas (couches, bean bags and pillows) in your learning center design.

Scheduling Considerations

Your program's schedule will depend on the number of members, staff and volunteers involved, and whether you are running a mandatory or voluntary program.

For example, if you have a three-hour Power Hour session on weekday afternoons, you could invite members of any age to come at any time within those three hours, or you could designate the first hour for first- through fourth-graders, the second hour for fifth- through eighth-graders and the third hour for ninth- through 12th-graders. Be sure to schedule children and teens at different times during the day.

Another way to schedule Power Hour is to offer it as a **drop-in program** open during normal Club hours. For example, the program could be available to all members from 2 P.M. to 9 P.M. on Monday through Thursday and from 2 P.M. to 6 P.M. on Friday. In many cases, the Club's resources dictate when Power Hour can be offered; if you have limited staff, for example, that will determine the hours the program is available.

As you work out the schedule, pay attention to the ratio between members and homework supervisors. Most programs have only one staff or volunteer on a given day, but it is important to keep the member/staff ratio as low as possible. The recommended ratio is **eight members to one supervisor**, and the maximum should not exceed 18 members to one supervisor. If you have a large group participating the program, you may find that you need to recruit more volunteers.

Fridays

Most Clubs run Power Hour on Monday through Thursday and reserve Friday for awarding points, special celebrations, awards, games or simply as an "off" day, meaning that no Power Hour program is available. High-yield learning activities, however, are still offered on Fridays. Your Club, however, may opt to run Power Hour five days a week, including Fridays.

Assessing Members' Individual Needs

Although it is not necessary to assess the needs of each and every member receiving homework help, it is a good idea to do so with members who

attend Power Hour regularly, as well as those who have special needs or are receiving tutoring assistance.

There are several ways to assess a Club member's needs, and none of them is mandatory. However, when you are able to conduct these investigations, they can be a great source of information about the needs of the member.¹⁴

- ✦ Interviews with the member's **teacher** or teachers, and possibly with school counselors and/or the principal;
- ✦ Interviews with the member's **parent(s)** or guardian(s);
- ✦ Interviews with **members**, asking what they think *they* need help with;
- ✦ The notes and comments kept in members' files in the **Power Recorder**. At the beginning of the program, you will not have information on file for each member. As the program progresses, however, you will be able to check each member's file in the Power Recorder to see comments made about him or her during the program.

Setting Target Goals for Members

Club staff should set **short-term goals for each member** involved in the program, and once these goals are met, they should be revised and expanded. Goals should be stated

in terms of Power Points, the points members earn by arriving on time, finishing homework assignments and, when homework is completed, for doing extra work such as Power Pages or high-yield learning activities. When new members come into the program, it is a good idea to talk to them about Power Rewards, and work with them to establish a reachable, short-term Power Point goal. Once you and the member arrive at a goal, it should be recorded in the personalized file in the Power Recorder.

Remember that members can see the progress they are making toward their goals by looking at the Power Poster or the Club's bulletin board that charts members' Power Points.

Powerful Ideas

In addition to setting goals for each member, some Clubs have had great success in setting **group goals**. You may want to gather all of your members together and offer them an incentive if they – as a group – can earn 2,000 or 5,000 points (or a number you determine) within a certain amount of time. The incentive could be a day at a water theme park or a trip to the zoo. Clubs can set any time period that seems appropriate for the group – one month or three months or the whole year.

Some Clubs may already have a **goal-setting program** in place, such as the Goals for Graduation program, which focuses on setting and attaining daily, weekly and yearly academic goals. If your Club already has such a program, you might want to position the Power Poster next to your "I Did It!" poster in order to create one area of the Club that specifically focuses on a brighter academic future.



Goals for Graduation

Another Project Learn resource to use with members is B&GCA's Goals for Graduation, a program for members aged 6 to 15 years. Goals for Graduation uses a variety of one-on-one, small-group and large-group activities to support academic goal setting, learning and success in school. For more information, visit the Web site at www.bgca.net/Programs/Education & Career Development.

To place an order for Goals for Graduation, contact National Supply Service at (404) 487-5701 or supplyservice@bgca.org.

Member Orientation

When new members enter the Power Hour program, it is recommended that – after

friendly, relaxed introductions – a significant amount of time be devoted to the details of the program's organizational system. The orientation could highlight key aspects and components of the program, including:

Check-in Sheets – Members must check in with the supervisor to make sure their names are written down for the day.

Bulletin Board of Excellence – Clubs recognize special milestones members have reached (for example, posting a paper that earned a high grade). Some Clubs call this the "Wall of Fame."

Power Poster – Each member's level of Power Points is displayed on the Power Poster or a special bulletin board to recognize progress.

Club Resources – Members find out where to find pencils, atlases or other materials they may need to complete their homework.

Power Source – Members get an idea of the range of Power Pages available to them once they have completed their homework assignments.

High-yield learning Activities – Members get an overview of the list of high-yield learning activities they may engage in once their homework is completed.

Power Point – Members are introduced to the Power Point system and how it works.

Power Rewards – Members learn about the rewards they can earn by participating in Power Hour.

Identifying the Need for Tutors

If you decide to include a one-on-one tutoring component in your program, you will need to recruit tutors. Recruiting

tutors is similar to recruiting volunteers, and you may want to refer to the “Recruiting Volunteers” section for details on where to find them, how to interview them, what to look for and how to screen them.

If you decide you need a tutoring component, it will be necessary to decide which members will benefit most from **one-on-one attention** and individualized help. Discussions with members’ teachers or parents will be especially helpful.

Do your best to make **good matches between tutors and members**. Look for similar interests – baseball or music or anything else. You might want to put together tutors and members who come from the same neighborhood, for example. Sometimes an older male teen is the perfect tutor for a young boy, but often a female adult will be much better in this situation. Some studies have shown that matching tutors and students by ethnic background produces especially positive results, but there are exceptions to this rule. Although it is important to find a good match, it is important not to become too concerned about matching, because a good tutor should be able to work with any member. Whatever method you use for matching members and tutors, what is important is that there be a **strong bond** between them. For this reason, you may want to encourage tutors and members to participate in an activity together before they begin the tutoring relationship.

For more information, see the “About Tutoring” section in this guide.

Funding Proposals and Strategies

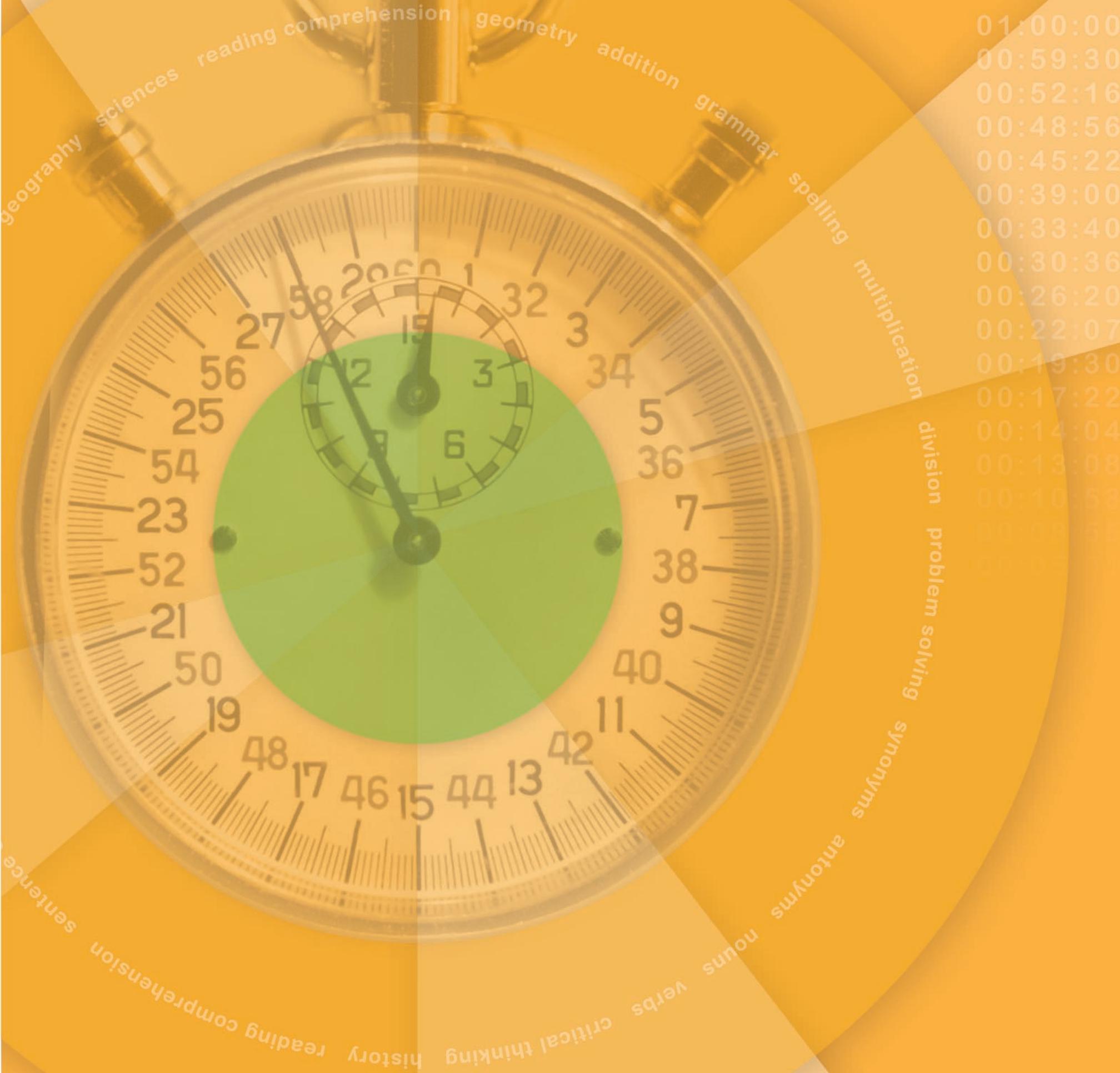
Successful fund-raising efforts can make a significant difference in the quality and reach of new programs such as Power Hour.

Clubs can use a funding proposal (a sample proposal can be downloaded from the Power Hour page of the Web site), customize it to their organization and send it to selected organizations.

You may have already a list of candidates to whom you should send your funding proposal. **Community service organizations** like the Rotary Club are a good place to start, and if you need other ideas, your local library is an excellent resource. Talk to the reference librarian about guidebooks on getting grants. There are also several **grant-finding resources** on the Internet, most of them fully searchable and free of charge.

It is important for Clubs to **think strategically** about whom to approach for funding, and to create a plan in advance. There are many factors to take into consideration when targeting a funding source: *Is the organization’s mission compatible with your Club’s? Is it better to contact national or local sources? Who is the organization’s target audience? Has this group been approached previously for funding?*

Clubs can access the “Sample Funding Proposal” by visiting the B&GCA Web site at www.bgca.net. Go to the program page, and click on *Power Hour* to find the sample.



geography sciences reading comprehension geometry addition grammar spelling multiplication division problem solving synonyms nouns verbs critical thinking history reading comprehension sentence

01:00:00
00:59:30
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00:48:56
00:45:22
00:39:00
00:33:40
00:30:36
00:26:20
00:22:07
00:19:30
00:17:22
00:14:04
00:13:08
00:10:53
00:09:50



Whether your Club already has a Power Hour program or is implementing one for the first time, there may be ways you can enhance your program to make it even more effective for members.

Responsibilities of the Program Coordinator

There are **ten basic steps** that the Power Hour Coordinator should be doing daily

in implementing the program. Although these steps cover the essentials common to most Clubs, feel free to modify them or add new ones in order to customize your program to the specific needs of your membership.

1. Write the date on a blank copy of a **Check-in Sheet**, and add the names of members as they arrive. (You may choose also to record members' Club ID numbers from their membership cards.)
2. Make sure that all members are **seated** appropriately. This might mean arranging individuals by grade level, placing small "table tents" with the grade level showing to make identification easier. Or, it might mean keeping troublesome pairs of members seated separately. Members who need quiet, focused time should be seated at a private desk instead of at a group table.
3. Ensure that all members have the **basic supplies** they need – paper, pencils, textbooks and any other materials required by the day's assignments.
4. Find out if anyone **needs help** getting started. Remind members that, before they can pick up a pencil and do the homework, they must first read the directions to make sure they understand what is being asked of them.
5. As members are working on their assignments, move around the room to **check in** with individuals. One of the most important tasks of a homework helper is to ensure that all members completely **understand** their assignments.
6. As members complete assignments, check their homework for **completeness and accuracy**, and note their progress on the Check-in Sheet beside their names. If you have any special observations about a member's attitude, behavior or performance, record comments on the back of the sheet, using the member's sign-in number (in the first column) rather than name.
7. If a member **finishes early**, check to make sure that all work is complete, correct and presentable – ready to be turned in. If it is complete, give the member the option of earning additional Power Points by working on **Power Pages** from the Power Source, or suggest a **high-yield learning activity** for the member, based on interest and willingness.
8. Keep a **log** of any completed Power Pages or high-yield learning activities on the Check-in Sheet beside members' names.
9. Remember that you cannot be a one-on-one tutor to all members in the session. Do your best to **give each member attention**, helping him complete assignments, organize materials and budget time. Make sure all members stay focused and on-task. Use your best judgment about the help each member needs, but remember that you will not be able to help every one of them all of the time.
10. At the end of the session, double-check the Power Points awarded to each member, and tally them in the final column of the Check-in Sheet. Enter the scores into the **Master Tracker**. If there are any comments or observations recorded on the back of the Check-in Sheet, transfer these into the respective members' files in the **Power Recorder**.



Steps to Grade Improvements with Homework Help

1. Encourage members to participate in the homework help program.
2. When members arrive at the Club, remind them of the program and get them in the door.
3. Remind members of the benefits of regular attendance at sessions.
4. Make sure members bring their tools and resources (i.e., paper, pencils, textbooks, workbooks or worksheets).
5. Make sure members bring their homework assignments each day.
6. Help members focus on their work for an age-appropriate amount of time.
7. Make sure members complete their homework.
8. Check members' homework for accuracy.
9. Remind members to turn in their homework the next day.
10. Follow up with members to see if their homework was correct.

When Members Finish Early

If a member finishes all assigned homework before the session ends, or arrives with no homework at all, that member can either work on a grade-appropriate Power Page

from the Power Source binder, or engage in a high-yield learning activity.

A list of suggested high-yield learning activities can be found in the "Program Components" section of this Guide.

Remember that, for most members, Power Hour often is not a true "hour" of homework. The youngest members usually have fewer than 30 minutes of work, while members aged 8 to 12 typically have approximately one hour of homework. Members 13 years and older need as much time as it takes, and this could extend well beyond an hour. Each member is different in terms of her homework load and the speed at which she works.

Powerful Ideas



In many Clubs, staff or volunteers regularly "check around" with classmates of a member who has finished his work, to make sure that he really has completed all assignments. If you decide to ask your volunteers or staff members to do this, make sure that they do so in the spirit of helpfulness – helping the member make sure that he did not "accidentally" forget something. Do not make members feel like they are not trusted.

Many Clubs give a **hand stamp** – or other type of pass – to members once they complete their homework for the day. This is especially important in a mandatory program. Once a member has the stamp, this is his or her passport, allowing entry into all other Club activities.

In sessions where there are members of varying ages, older members should be encouraged to spend their extra time helping younger members with homework. Not only does this kind of peer help build **confidence and leadership skills**, it also earns the older member Power Points. Ideally, teens should be of appropriate maturity to be able to help the members with whom they are working.

One Club has an innovative idea hanging on the wall of its learning center: a bell! When members finish their homework, they go over and **ring the bell**, letting everyone know that their work is done and they may now move on to other activities in the Club. The sound of the bell might seem distracting at first, but it can be a powerful motivator. As other members hear the ringing, they are encouraged to work hard and finish their homework so they, too, may ring the bell. You can decide for yourself whether the bell approach would motivate or distract your Club members.

Power Points, Power Poster, Power Rewards

At the end of each week, with all members gathered around, the

Power Hour Coordinator marks the new totals of Power Points on the Power Poster or on the thematic Power Hour bulletin board. This creates **excitement and anticipation** as members near their goals for winning Power Rewards.

If your program meets Monday through Thursday, you might use Fridays as the day that you and your staff mark the new Power Point scores on the poster or bulletin board. Some clubs prefer to do this once a month. However often you update the points, be sure to let members take a look to see how much closer they have come to their goals (and the rewards that accompany the goals).

When it is appropriate, members can claim their rewards. Any time a member does claim a Power Reward, remember to help that member set a new, higher goal.

Remember that Power Points are designed to motivate members to work hard toward the goal of winning prizes. The more you can **share in members' excitement** and the more you encourage them to try for earning additional points, the greater their enthusiasm and efforts will be.

Powerful Idea

Many Clubs allow members to redeem their Power Points for Club privileges rather than for more tangible rewards or prizes.

Members can use their Power Points to go to the head of the line for a given Club activity, or they may use points for open swim time in the swimming pool or open court time on the basketball courts. Members are often more motivated by these kinds of rewards than they are by tangible rewards, because others in the Club can see that they have reached a certain point level.



Using a Theme

Clubs can select a theme for the Power Hour program on a yearly

basis, or vary it from season to season or month to month. No matter how often you select a new theme, try to choose one that is compatible with the specific goals of your Club, and one that also will **excite, inspire and motivate** your members. Once selected, the theme can be used to decorate the learning center and to promote the program.

For example, if you select a theme of **Discover Your Super Powers**, you might want to use decorations, cut-outs and designs taken from popular comic books. You and your members could draw pictures of Power Hour super-heroes – such as *Speed Reader*, *Calculator Woman* and *The Geographer*. Flyers advertising the program could be bright and colorful, designed to look like comic strips. The possibilities for themes are limited only by your imagination.

Here are a few other theme ideas to get you started:

Rocket Fuel – Spaceships ascend on fuel points earned.

Learning Safari – Elephants and zebras advance on animal track trails.

The Magic of Flight – Birds, planes and hot air balloons rise on clouds.

In Search of ... Excellence – Members use magnifying glasses and a detective theme to follow a trail of clues.

Fantastic Freeway – On a board decorated with traffic signs, cars advance on lanes of traffic and road-markers.

Fishing Expedition – Colorful fish advance on a trail of fishing line attached to fishing rods and reels.

Galloping to Greatness – Ponies advance on trails of horseshoes, jumping over white fences that represent high point levels such as 50, 100 and 150.

Reach the Rainbow – A colorful rainbow stretches outward, with alternating colors representing members, and clouds and pots of gold representing award levels.

Stick-to-It – Members are awarded colorful stickers for every five or 10 points they earn, and are allowed to stick them onto the poster to keep track of their points.

Dance Fever – Footprints follow arrows leading members through different dance steps – such as Salsa, Hip-Hop and Tango – that represent different award levels.

Yellow Brick Road – Members follow the yellow bricks of varying point values that lead to success.

Powerful Ideas



In addition to keeping a public record of the number of Power Points each individual member has earned (or in some Clubs, the number of points that the Club as a whole has earned), some Clubs choose to count the number of pages read by the membership. Staff members or volunteers keep track of the number of pages that each member reads during each session. The totals are tallied, and when the entire Club has read a pre-determined grand total number of pages, there is a celebration for everyone in the program.

If possible, try to connect your Club's Power Rewards to the theme you have selected, so the theme can be woven right into your Club's incentive strategy. For example, if your theme is "Rocket Fuel," you could offer a year-end Power Reward of a trip to an aerospace museum. Or, if your theme is "Fishing Expedition," offer a year-end Power Reward of a fishing and camping trip.

Overcoming Members' Resistance to Homework

Engaging Members

Young people often resist homework because it is just that, work. In spite of

this, it is possible for you to breathe some fresh air into members' homework assignments. Here are a few ideas to **engage members** and **make homework more fun**.

For a member who is having trouble settling down or concentrating, you might ask her how long she thinks it will take her to complete a problem. Use an egg timer – set to the appropriate time – to time her. Once that problem is complete, set the timer for a shorter time period (by a few seconds) for the next problem. This technique can be effective in getting members to focus without pushing them.

Another idea is to hold a spelling bee for members who have the same spelling list. Or, you might want to ask members to write a short story using as many of their spelling words as possible.

There is no limit to the possibilities, and the only constraint is time. Remember that there will be times when you will want to spend more time on one assignment, bringing it to life and getting the group excited about the learning process.



General Hints for Handling Resistance

- ✦ **Are members restless, bored or distracted?** Have a fun, educational activity ready. Take a break by doing a crossword puzzle, talking about something in the news, taking a tour of the Club or reading a riddle or cartoon.
- ✦ **Are members having a hard time remembering what you talk about?** Explain it in a different way, then review. At the end of the homework session, ask members to tell you what they learned. Make up a game using the skills and knowledge they have just learned.
- ✦ **Are members having trouble understanding what to do?** Have a clear goal up front and share it with members. Explain the same thing in different ways, or ask members to help plan for your next session.
- ✦ **Are members quiet or shy?** Be positive. Praise members when it is appropriate (members know when you are not being truthful). Club members sometimes wonder, “Am I here because I am dumb?” or “Am I doing the right thing?” or “Does this person like me?” Make members feel accepted and successful.¹⁵
- ✦ **Are members aggressive, sassy or uncooperative?** Be firm. Try to ignore negative behavior when appropriate, and compliment cooperation (e.g., “You are really listening. Good for you.” or “Great idea!”) Be supportive of members.

Dealing With Common Excuses

I forgot my textbook. If your program has copies of all textbooks used by participants, this excuse is easy to deal with. If not, ask around and you are almost certain to find a classmate of the member who has his book. When this happens, make a note on the back of the Check-in Sheet – it is important to know if this is one instance or a bad habit.

I don’t have a pencil. Have plenty of materials on hand to avoid this and similar excuses.

I’m tired. Have sleepy members stand and stretch for a few minutes – jumping jacks, yoga stretches, push-ups, toe-touches, deep breathing – anything that gets them to move their muscles and breathe more deeply.

Movement gets the blood flowing, and gets oxygen moving to the brain. If only one or a small group of members needs a stretch – make sure that they do so quietly so as not to disturb the others. Encourage all members to get a good night’s sleep.

I’m hungry. Some Clubs choose to begin each Power Hour session with a nutritious snack – apples, cookies, carrots, granola bars, raisins, nuts, PBJ sandwiches – to head off any hunger problems. You may be able to get healthful food donated from area food banks or local restaurants. Other Clubs use a different tactic – they offer a snack only after all homework is completed. This approach satisfies members’ hunger while encouraging them to get their work done.

Members are acting out, being loud or otherwise disruptive. Generally speaking, when members act out, it is often a sign that they are having a hard time with their work. They have come up against a wall and instead of trying to figure out the problem at hand, they are seeking to avoid the work by distracting themselves or creating a diversion. The best response is to return the focus to the problem at hand. Take a look at the member’s work and see where she stopped. Provide homework help in a personalized manner and try to help the member over the hump. Read over the assignment together, ask the member leading questions and engage her in a conversation about the work.

You might try separating members who are disruptive when they sit together. Take aside the member who is acting out and talk with him. Discuss the value of getting the homework done and over with. Be honest about the fact that no one loves doing homework, but it is a necessity. Break down his homework into an accomplishable task, and ask that he work on this one assignment in order to return focus. Make sure he understands the assignment, and find out if there is a larger issue underlying the disruptive behavior.

If this does not work and the disruptive behavior continues, remind members of the contract that they and their parents have signed (if your Club uses contracts.) If problems persist, it is appropriate to exclude disruptive members from upcoming reward events. If the member continues to be disruptive, the volunteer or staff member should speak to the Power Hour Coordinator, who will then follow standard Club protocol for contacting parents or guardians. Remember also to make notes about unruly behavior on the back of the Check-in Sheet.

Specific Ideas by Age Group

Grades K-3

Before children can learn anything, they first have to **learn how to learn**. It is in the

early grades that members begin to understand the importance of homework, how to prepare for it, what they need to complete it, how to organize their work and how to structure their time. Apart from household chores, homework will be the first test of **personal responsibility** for these members. Most of them will not have very lengthy or involved homework, but completion of these assignments still represents an important step in their development as lifelong learners.

Here are a few important considerations unique to members in grades K-3:

Timing. Because their load will be relatively “light,” these youngest members will rarely need a full hour of homework time during Power Hour. In fact, you might want to set a goal of 30 minutes for younger members.

Direction. Young members also may have a difficult time taking on fully self-directed projects or high-yield learning activities on their own. It is often easier to shorten the time and work with them as a group (or a few small groups) if you have enough volunteers and staff members to supervise them.

Expectations. You may have to first help young members understand that something is expected of them. You may have to spell out exactly what this means. Try to phrase it in positive terms – talk about how happy their teacher and parents will be when their homework sheets are turned in on time, neatly completed. Avoid the opposite approach – telling them that their parents or teachers will be very angry with them or very disappointed if they do not turn their assignments in on time.

Approach. The approach with young members also must be gentle. It is in the earliest years that some members get turned off to the entire concept of school and education, thinking that it just is not for them. Give your staff license to really have fun – to draw pictures or tell stories to help make assignments come alive.

Organization. Expect to do a lot of the organizing for the youngest members in the first few weeks of the program. Patience is especially needed during this initial period. After a short time, some members will begin to understand the way things are done and take a natural initiative in helping their peers put everything in the right place. This is a wonderful development, but eventually all members must learn to perform these acts of organization all by themselves.

Skills. When the younger members have finished their homework assignments, volunteers and staff should work with them to reinforce basic skills such as reading and math, as well as topics such as shapes, colors and telling time.

Recognition. Recognize and help young members’ celebrate their success – when they have completed even simple assignments – so they begin to understand the rewards inherent in achieving something set before them.



Making Spelling Fun

Make spelling more fun for Club members with games and competitions that engage them. Remember that people learn in different ways, so try various activities to see which ones help members most:

- ✦ Have Club members draw pictures to illustrate the word, and then write the word under each picture.
- ✦ Create a play that includes all the spelling words. At certain points during the play, Club members can spell out the words being used.
- ✦ Have a spelling bee, using different lists for different ages and ability levels. If older Club members complain about having more difficult words to spell, remind them that the younger members still have to work, just as they do, to learn the “easy” words.
- ✦ Make up a song using the spelling words, or try to spell the words to a beat. Because some members will learn better if they are moving or singing, you may even want to have them dance the words! Remind them to imagine the dancing and singing in their minds during the spelling tests at school.
- ✦ Sound out the words.
- ✦ Give prizes or Power Points when a member can spell all the words on the list.
- ✦ Spell words with big objects that look like letters. Make a list of all spelling words that covers the floor or the learning center or the library. Use bowling pins, sticks, yarn, etc.
- ✦ Make a crossword puzzle, word search or letter jumble and solve.

Remember that there will be some hard work in spelling. Unfortunately nothing can completely replace writing each word five times! Combining the routine, skill-and-drill work with more fun activities will take the sting out of spelling.

Grades 4-5

As members reach the fourth grade, their homework assignments begin to increase in number and complexity. Math and science become more important and reading becomes a primary focus. Assignments also require basic research for the first time.

When members in grades 4-5 finish their work early, staff and volunteers should help them focus on **reading, math and research skills**, as well as skills such as organization and planning, if some members need help in those areas.

An excellent high-yield learning activity for this age group is reading. At this age, members should be encouraged to read as much as possible, whether it is a book (or even a magazine) they bring from home or school or borrow from the Club library. Clubs also may want to use extra time to introduce and reinforce basic research skills to these young members.

Teaching Research Skills to Young Members

For members in grades 4-5, knowing how to use a dictionary, a thesaurus and an atlas are important skills. As they become more knowledgeable, a field trip to a library might be helpful for developing skills at using a card catalog – either computerized or on index cards.

Many Club members, even the youngest ones, may know already how to conduct research on the Internet and are familiar with its many search engines. They know that simply typing in a word can yield a wealth of resources and information – and also a lot of useless information. If you have Internet access in your Club, it can be a valuable resource for members, but it is important to help them learn to discern useful from useless information when they are conducting searches.

If time allows, staff and volunteers might want to make up drills and games for practicing basic research skills. Here are some examples of simple practice games:

Dictionary. Have members look up a word. For example, they look up the word monkey. In the definition, they should pick out one word – *mammal* – for instance, and then look up that word as well. Members should continue, making as many “links” as possible between the words they research.

Thesaurus. Ask members to write a simple sentence on the board, “The tall teacher happily found a new path in the woods.” Now, ask them to use the thesaurus to find substitute words for *tall*, *teacher*, *happily*, *found*, *path* and *woods*. Ask them to write their new sentences and read them aloud to the group.

Atlas. Have members look up the names of their own cities or towns or states or nearby rivers and lakes. There is a very good chance that there is another place with the same or a similar name somewhere else in the country or in the world. (Example: Paris, France and Paris, Texas.) Ask members to see how many “sister” places they can find for nearby locations.

Internet. Go to a search engine page, such as www.google.com. Give members something to search for, such as *SpongeBob SquarePants* toys or baseball cards. Have them type in the words they think will lead them to the right pages. You may have to help them with spelling. Sit with members as they sort through the results to try to select those that look most promising.



Information Lines

Let members know that they can do research for homework assignments by calling the local public library or newspaper information line. Have these phone numbers handy for members, so they learn to use options other than the Internet for research, and so they are able to continue their work even if all computers are being used.

Special-Needs and Hard-to-Reach Youth

Clubs must take the time and care to identify hard-to-reach members.

These members may be failing in school, or they may be good students whose grades and performance have recently taken a sharp downturn. They also may be students earning good grades, but who maintain a disruptive and negative attitude. Hard-to-reach members also could include those who have been diagnosed with learning

disabilities, are on medication or who have been pulled out of mainstream classes and placed in a special class.

These members who have been identified by teachers, parents, principals or counselors as requiring special attention should, whenever possible, be placed in the tutoring component of the Power Hour program. The careful, focused attention that a one-on-one tutor can provide can be extremely helpful for special-needs and hard-to-reach youth. These are the children most at-risk and most in need of what the tutoring component of Power Hour can offer.

Remember that not everyone must move at the same pace. There may be members for whom attending once a week, and finishing 10 percent of homework assignments would be seen as an *improvement*. It is important to take small steps, have reasonable expectations and be there when these students need help. Treat these members with **respect**. **Listen** to their concerns. Understand how they comprehend the assignments, and look for the barriers they are facing. Then try your best – with patience – to remove the obstacles.

It is important also to talk to your volunteers and tutors. Remind them that not every member with a problem has been identified already by a teacher or counselor. The tutors and volunteers are valuable assets who will come to know these members very well. They should **trust their instincts** and their observations, and be sure to take careful notes of unusual or troubling behavior patterns on the back of the Check-in Sheet. When the Power Hour Coordinator notices a pattern emerging in a student’s file in the Power Recorder, it might be time to speak to that member’s parents and/or teacher.

If necessary, discuss members’ needs, progress and challenges with their teachers or parents. Remember that, although you are not expected to know how to meet the needs of every member, you are expected to **identify partners** – such as teachers and social workers – to help you serve each member effectively.

Be sure to check out the B&GCA Web site (www.bgca.org) for helpful and informative technical

assistance papers on a variety of relevant subjects. For example, as Power Hour Coordinator, you may want to read the paper on “Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder” so you can better understand and help members in the program who have been diagnosed with ADHD.

let them know that Internet surfing, just for fun, is a Power Reward that must be earned.

As members begin to use the Internet, make sure they are aware of Internet-based B&GCA programs such as **ClubTech** and **NetSmartz**, programs in graphic design, digital arts and Web development:

ClubTech is an initiative designed to bring a range of technology immersion and training programs to members and staff of B&GCA Clubs in such areas as basic computer skills, digital movie making, music making, photography, graphic design and Web development.

NetSmartz is an educational resource for teaching children how to safely use and enjoy the Internet. The program makes use of colorful, age-appropriate animated characters and is available to all Clubs nationwide or via the site www.netsmartz.org.

Youth with Special Needs

Because members come to the Club with varying abilities and learning styles, Power Hour mentors may occasionally need to partner with teachers and parents to provide extra help for youth with special needs. A Department of Education publication – “Homework Tips for Parents” – offers general homework tips as well as specific guidelines for helping youth with reading problems. This publication, and others, is available through the Web site at www.ed.gov.

The Use of Technology and the Internet

The Internet

The Internet is an excellent medium for conducting research on any given subject, but only if members already

know enough about the subject to differentiate between helpful, reliable information and useless information from unreliable sources. The Internet also must be used responsibly, the same way one would use any book in a library. This means that members who choose to use the Internet to research papers must have a full understanding of what plagiarism means. **Plagiarism** means that members cannot copy and paste from any page on the Internet without giving credit to the original writer. Help members understand that research is one thing, and stealing is another.

Anyone who has conducted searches on the Web knows how easy it is to get lost in a never-ending succession of pages. Because the primary goal of Power Hour is homework completion, any time spent on the computer must be **directly focused** on completing an assignment. It is important for volunteers and staff to guide members as they conduct searches on the Internet, and

Youth Research Tools

The American Association of School Librarians offers research tools and search engines especially designed for youth, including an explanation of the four stages of the research process. The tools and resources can be found at www.ala.org/aasl.

Calculators

Increasingly, schools are allowing older students to use calculators in class and even on tests. The reasoning is that it is the concepts that matter, not the ability to do computations. Regardless of school policy, the simple fact is that the ability to multiply, divide, add, subtract and calculate percentages is something we need to do almost every day – whether it is figuring out which brand of cereal is a better buy, or converting to or from the metric system.

One suggestion is to let older members use calculators on worksheets with long series of similar problems, but only after they have completed the first few problems by hand, with pencil and paper. When you see that their computation skills are solid, you may want to let them use the calculator as a timesaving device.

Keeping in Touch with Parents

Parents play an important role in determining a child's attitude toward homework. They can make a major contribution to

their child's educational achievement by reinforcing the importance of homework and by answering questions, providing a setting conducive to study, drilling the child in spelling and math, accompanying the child to the library, rehearsing "show and tell" talks, helping select and design science fair exhibits, shopping for project materials and praising the child's efforts and accomplishments.

Parental involvement is paramount to the success of an after-school program. A parent is a child's first and most important teacher, and their importance as a source of information and support cannot be overstated. In some cases, the parenting figure in a member's life may be a guardian or another significant community adult.

The attitudes of members are most often **mirrors of their parents' attitudes**. In fact, one detailed study in the 2001 issue of *The Journal of Experimental Education* found that students' attitudes toward homework were unaffected by their grades, classroom size, levels of ability or almost any other measure. The only sure predictor of their attitudes toward homework was that of their parents'. It stands to reason that if a homework help program can exert a positive influence on parents' attitudes toward homework, the attitudes of their children also will be improved.¹⁶

It is a good idea for the Power Hour Coordinator to speak with parents and teachers **once a month** about each individual member. This is an opportunity to share observations and, where applicable, to voice concern or praise members' efforts. Here are some basic guidelines for keeping in touch with parents:

- ✦ Notes should be taken at these meetings – whether they are conducted in person, on the phone or even via email. These **notes** should be dated and included in the Power Recorder attached to each member's file.
- ✦ Parents should be contacted when you have **particular concerns** about a given member. Be as specific as possible, drawing direct examples from the notes and observations in the Power Recorder.

- ✦ Use sessions with parents not only to communicate about a member's performance, but also to **gather information** on any noted changes in behavior or attitude toward school, learning or homework that parents have observed in their child.
- ✦ It is important to share members' **accomplishments and progress** with parents on a regular basis.
- ✦ In addition, parents should be invited to all **reward activities** that celebrate members' achievement and progress.
- ✦ Parents are also important allies during the preparation stages of Power Hour. They can have a positive influence if they are called upon to make suggestions for the very **design of the program**. Remember that those families that take an active part in the development of your club's Power Hour program are much more likely to remain involved.
- ✦ When meeting with parents, try to focus on what they specifically have observed in their child – what **progress they have or have not seen** when it comes to homework and general attitude toward education.
- ✦ When meeting with parents, you can be proactive, inquiring about **test scores and classroom participation**, trying to determine if benefits gained in the program are translating to the classroom. This is an opportunity for you and the parents to share with each other success stories, tips and helpful strategies that have worked with a particular child.

Maintaining Contact with Teachers

Because homework completion directly impacts members' classroom experiences, the Power

Hour Coordinator should – if possible – be in contact with teachers once a month. At the very least, teachers should be contacted when there is an identified area of concern – if the member is sick, misses school for an extended period of time or forgets what her homework is.

There should be a **free flow of observations** about members' attitudes, behavior, aptitudes and any other noted improvements, changes or areas of concern.

Teachers also should be invited to a Power Hour open house and the **reward celebrations**.



Homework Hotlines and Web Sites

Many public schools have hotlines – describing daily homework assignments by course or by teacher – designed for parents to call when a child is sick or misses school for an extended period. Club leaders may want to access a school’s hotline if a member is unclear about an assignment. Leaders need to remember, though, that members are ultimately responsible for their homework, including keeping track of the assignments.

Increasingly, many school systems across the country maintain a Web site to track the day’s homework assignments for the parents of all students. Parents can log on and see just what their child has to do that evening. Many Clubs located in areas where this system exists have been able to get signed releases from members’ parents giving Clubs permission to access this site. You or a staff member can log on and check to make sure that all of your members are doing everything they are supposed to do. You also can check to see the progress of your members – by reviewing their completed/incomplete assignments, you can assess the impact and success of your program on each individual member.

Powerful Idea

One Club maintains a daily connection with area schools by using a rubber stamp to mark all homework completed during Power Hour with the message: “Completed at the Boys & Girls Club.” As teachers receive the homework, the message is continually reinforced that they have an active partner in the education of their students.



Special Events

Members, staff and volunteers work very hard throughout the year toward the goal of 100 percent homework completion. Special events are a fun way to reward the effort and excellence of members, volunteers and Club staff.

Celebrating Milestones – Award Ceremonies for Members

At least **twice a year** – once at the end of each half of the school year – your Club should hold an award ceremony for Power Hour members. You can invite members’ parents, teachers, homework helpers, tutors, staff, friends and families. Certificates of achievement should be handed out to all members, and special recognition – perhaps **T-shirts, trophies or plaques** – can be awarded to those who have met or exceeded their stated goals. Be sure to use the Power Hour Bulletin Board or Power Poster to demonstrate the levels that members have attained.

These “honor-roll-party” events are important. Not only do they **publicly acknowledge** members’ hard work and praise their achievements, improvements and diligence, but also they provide opportunities for members to step back and see their **extensive support network** of family, friends and educators, all proud of their accomplishments.

Many Clubs already have extensive Club-wide awards ceremonies once or twice a year. These ceremonies honor members for their participation and performance in the whole range of programs employed at the Club. Instead of having a separate ceremony solely for Power Hour, you might opt instead to include a number of trophies, plaques or certificates – for excellence in the Power Hour program – as part of the Club-wide ceremony. You can distribute awards for “most improved,” “best effort,” “most Power Pages,” “best improvement in GPA” or “most Power Points.” An important benefit of including Power Hour awards in the Club-wide ceremony is that the entire Club understands the importance of academics, as they witness friends and fellow Club members being rewarded for homework completion.

Giving Thanks and Recognition to Volunteers and Tutors

As important as it is for members to take pride in their own accomplishments, it is equally important for them to learn to **give thanks and recognition** where it is due. These same award ceremonies are ideal for distributing certificates or plaques to the program's dedicated volunteers and tutors.

If possible, have **members deliver these awards**, sharing stories of volunteers' work and assistance. These dedicated helpers have an opportunity to be thanked and acknowledged in public, and to witness **the difference they have made** in the lives of young people.

Ongoing Training and Assessment of Volunteers and Tutors

Recruiting dedicated and talented volunteers is an important element in the success of

your program, but it is also important to train them properly and assess their work from time to time.

Your Club probably already has a **general training program** for new volunteers. The following suggestions can help you add homework help and tutoring training to your current program.

Training for Homework Helpers and Tutors

- ✦ Underscore the importance of their **time commitment**. They must honor their contract and show up each day they are expected, and on time.
- ✦ Provide an **orientation** of the program's protocols. Show them the Check-in Sheets so they learn how to keep the records they are expected to keep.
- ✦ Discuss the **range of member needs**, learning styles and problems. Explain how some members are very visual learners, how others are talkative when they do not receive enough attention, how others benefit from a snack before beginning work. Draw on your experiences in the program to paint a picture of the variety of members and their learning/working styles.

- ✦ Have a workshop to discuss hypothetical problems and to **brainstorm positive solutions**. Cover topics such as: what to do when a member habitually forgets his work; what to do when a member is verbally abusing other members; what to do when a member always arrives half-asleep; what to do when a member is more focused on helping others with their work than on doing his own. Draw on your experiences in the program to come up with other situations for discussion.

Assessment of Homework Helpers and Tutors

Be sure to check in with your volunteers and tutors on a regular basis, if only to **thank** them again for their participation. Make the most of these meetings by discussing problems *and* successes. Be sure volunteers and tutors understand that they are vital to the program, and that they are held to the following standards:

- ✦ Showing up **on time**;
- ✦ Carefully completing all **record-keeping** and paperwork;
- ✦ Maintaining a **positive attitude** with members;
- ✦ Successfully **managing problems**.

If volunteers are not meeting these basic expectations, it is your responsibility to work with them to make sure they are able and willing to do so.

Showing Gratitude

There is no such thing as expressing too much gratitude or saying thanks too often. Have the art room members make thank-you cards that you can have on hand to distribute periodically. Have the Power Hour members make "powerful" thank-you notes to express their appreciation to volunteers and tutors.





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Understanding Teens' Unique Needs

Teens come to the Club with **attitudes, beliefs, interests and needs** that are very different from

those of younger members. They are capable of tremendous insights and have developed more sophisticated abilities to reason. If you speak directly to teens with **respect** and **frankness**, you can reason with them in order to get your point across. No matter how a teen is struggling, no matter how much resistance he exhibits, it is important to never give up on him. In the teen years, more than ever, young people need adult role models to believe in them and **offer encouragement and hope**.

By the time they reach their teens, some members already may have faced challenges in their lives that have caused them to question the value of education, or they may have become discouraged by school and decided that it is not for them.

Because teens' lives can be more complex and challenging than those of younger children, staff members need to think about creative ways to keep teens excited about homework completion and school success. When teens understand the importance of the work they are asked to do and are empowered to make choices that work for them, they bring enormous energy and excitement to their work.

Teens have a natural desire to **stretch boundaries**, so they often resist rigidity. For this reason, mandatory homework assistance programs for teens have not been successful at the majority of Clubs that have attempted them. Teens do not like the rigidity inherent in a mandatory program, and they may reject the idea of being treated in the same way the younger members are. It is important for teens to **feel free to drop in** to the Power Hour session whenever they need help. In addition, because teens often require more than an hour to get their homework completed, many Clubs set aside **90 minutes for homework assistance** for this age group. Some Clubs choose to give another name to the homework assistance program for teens, so that older members recognize that it is specifically geared to their needs. To make it even more customized, the homework assistance program for teens also can be housed in the Club's Teen Center.

Because teens need more challenging types of activities than younger members do, it is not practical to offer them Power Pages to complete. By providing a varied range of options for **high-yield learning activities** – such as mentoring younger members or working on the Club newsletter – Clubs can keep teens engaged in learning.

Teens also require **different rewards** than younger members do. Some Clubs have a different reward system for teens – including such incentives as travel in or out of state on a college tour or tickets to a sporting event. If you can link teens' long-term, hard-working participation in Power Hour to appealing rewards, teens will be more motivated to show up and get their work completed.



Creating a Teen Learning Center

The teen component of your Power Hour program will probably require additional resources beyond what you have available for younger members. Here are some factors to consider in planning a learning center space for teens:

Staff

Some Clubs have found that dedicating a separate staff person to oversee teen education programs takes their program to an entirely new level. When one person can spend time getting to know teens, working with their schools and planning education programs specifically for this age group, teens spend more time at the Club getting their homework done and participating in high-yield learning activities. This individual can work with volunteers to provide one-on-one assistance, or meet with school personnel about specific young people and their academic process. Some Clubs even create a College Club, where high school students receive assistance in every step of the college application process – from writing the application essay and getting recommendations to completing financial aid forms and deciding which college is best for them. Your Club does not need a full time person, however, to incorporate some of these ideas into your programming. If your Club does not have a teen education staff member, other teen staff and education staff can be involved with these activities.

Computers

As members get older, and especially in the teen years, there is a very good chance that school assignments will require use of the Internet or that papers will need to be prepared using word processing software. Your Club should have a computer area stocked with a printer and a supply of blank diskettes that can be labeled with members' names and kept at the Club.

Reference Materials

Teens are often assigned research papers that require not only use of the Internet, but also other reference sources. It is beneficial to have on hand a good dictionary, a thesaurus, an up-to-date encyclopedia and other all-purpose reference materials – either in book form or in CD-ROM format. In addition, Clubs may want to work with city and school libraries to make sure that textbooks and other commonly used books are stocked.

Separate Area

Teens will most likely participate in a separate Power Hour program just for them. But if your teen members attend the same sessions as the Club's younger members, it is important to provide a separate area for teens to complete their homework. Not only does the designated area help to eliminate unnecessary distractions, it also keeps teens from feeling as if they are being grouped with younger members or being treated like children.

Teens and Homework

Here are some general recommendations for assisting teens with homework:

- ✦ Have a separate time or space for teens to complete their homework.
- ✦ Provide middle- and high-school students with academic assistance, rather than room supervision, during the homework period.
- ✦ Allow teens to have greater independence and more time to study than younger members.
- ✦ Make sure that tutors of teens have the necessary academic skills to assist them adequately.
- ✦ Provide teens with the resources they need (books, magazines, technology) to support their academic needs.

Challenges for Volunteers

Homework sessions with teens present completely different

challenges to volunteers and staff members. In these grades, students are beginning to tackle much more difficult material – algebra, geometry, European history, physics. No one volunteer is likely to remember all of these subjects, which means that the homework helpers themselves might need to do a bit of homework! Reviewing copies of the Teacher’s Editions of textbooks is a good way to begin.

Let volunteers and staff members know that they are not expected to be experts in all subject areas. In fact, teens can learn important lessons in **humility** from adults who are not ashamed to say, “I don’t know.” It can be a powerful lesson for a teen to ask a question, and instead of getting the answer, have the helper sit down beside her and say, “Let’s find out together.” This is an opportunity for volunteers to model and reinforce **critical thinking skills** for teens.

Think about recruiting **content-specific volunteers and/or tutors**. Colleges and universities are a good place to start: Look for students majoring in math, physics, history or other subjects that present difficulty to your teen members.

The important thing to remember when recruiting volunteers and tutors for this age group is that working with teens is not the same as working with younger members. Not only do volunteers need a much greater body of knowledge in order to help teens with homework assignments, they also need to strive for a special bond with teens. At this point in their lives, teens are dealing with an enormous range of **social pressures** that cannot be ignored. Even when the focus is on something as straightforward as completing a homework assignment, peer pressure and anxiety are often present. Sensitive, mature, good listeners who are **patient, understanding and non-judgmental** are ideal volunteers to work with your Club’s teenage members.

Younger Teens (Grades 6-8)

This age is critical educationally. The transition from

elementary school to middle school can be a “make-or-break” one for many young people.¹⁷ Members in middle school are facing a much more complicated school day and a steep acceleration in the **amount and difficulty** of homework assigned. Many members will need a full hour or more of Power Hour to complete their day’s assignments.

In addition to the academic pressure these members are facing, they also are confronting the strong forces of **peer pressure**, cliques and pervasive **social insecurity**. Volunteers and staff members should not only help with homework, but also should model positive examples of **healthy interaction** for youth in this age group. Volunteers and tutors can help middle-school members by demonstrating sharing and **listening**, and by rewarding **generosity** and altruism.

For most members, middle school is the first time they will have **several different teachers** in the same day. Personality conflicts between teachers and students can shape which subject areas appeal to members and which present difficulties for them. For this reason, it is especially helpful for staff and volunteers to bring a fresh perspective to the material.

Reading

Reading comprehension is a key area of focus for this age group. In addition to setting Power Point goals, volunteers and staff can try setting **reading goals** for members. This might involve encouraging a member to move from a children's book to a chapter book, or it might involve the member reading a certain number of pages in a shorter period of time. Staff also could try to increase the amount of time members are able to sit and read quietly – by having them read for 10 minutes one week, 15 minutes the next, 20 minutes the week after that, and so on.

Another way to boost reading comprehension is through book clubs or discussion groups. Many teens love to debate, so it is a good idea to set up a time when they can talk about the themes in the books they are reading for school. Or, you may want to choose a fun book that they are not reading in school and start a book club – members still will be reading and improving their skills. Young people like to be read to, so think about reading aloud to members during these activities.

Math and Science

Young people are taking higher order math classes at a much younger age. To complete the math requirements needed for many colleges, middle-school students should be studying algebra and geometry. Check with your local schools to make sure your members are on track with the math courses they are taking.

In addition, members are being introduced to hands-on science processes at this age. Staff and volunteers can make Power Hour different from a normal school day by working science and math concepts into fun games and projects. For example, one Club treats members – after they have finished their homework – to games such as building and racing balloon-powered model cars.

PBS's science program, *Zoom*, suggests two fun science activities. In one, students build rockets with empty 35mm film canisters filled with baking soda and vinegar. In another, students build padded baskets and parachutes for a raw egg, and – if there is a safe upper-story window from which they can launch the egg – send it flying to see if the egg survives.

To learn more about fun science activities by *Zoom*, visit the Web site at <http://pbskids.org/zoom/>.

Study Skills

For those members who have not mastered organizational skills in elementary school, middle school will be even more of a struggle. Keeping track of homework for a number of different teachers or working on projects that are due at different times can be a challenge for members of this age group. Work with members to practice organizational skills. Have them write down all of their assignments (with due dates) in one location. Make sure they have a backpack or folder to keep their work. Help them stay focused and remember that homework is not completed until it has been checked for accuracy and turned in the next day!

Teens as Mentors – Peer Tutoring

Many Clubs have had great success in asking teens to **help younger members** with their

homework. Once the teens in your program have finished their own homework, one of the most rewarding high-yield learning activities in which they can engage is mentoring younger members. Ideally, teens should be of appropriate maturity to be able to help the members with whom they are working. This arrangement teaches great lessons in **responsibility** and **leadership** to teens. You can award extra Power Points to members who choose to take on this role.

Peer tutoring will come naturally to some members, especially those with younger siblings at home. You will find that many members thrive in this relationship in which they can assume a position of leadership and responsibility. While it is important for you to check in and make sure that the peer tutors are doing a good job, it is also a good idea to give them a bit of space and latitude to work with your Club's younger members, so they can fully enjoy this sense of helping and autonomy. At the same time, do not assume that all teens will automatically be comfortable working with younger members. Be careful to strike a balance between giving teens autonomy – and making sure they have the resources they need to give younger members useful assistance.

The Importance of Tutors for Teens

Tutors can be a special benefit to the teenage

members of your Club, and extra care must be taken to find the right match. It is important for tutors to be people whom members look up to. But at the same time, it is important for members and tutors to learn to develop **respect for each other** over time, by exchanging ideas and gradually getting to know each other.

As an administrator, try to have patience with the tutor-member pairings. Some matches will work beautifully from the very beginning, but those relationships that need more time to develop can be equally beneficial for teens. Try to resist the temptation to switch tutors if things do not go smoothly the first few days. Instead, help your tutors connect. It may mean encouraging them more, but it may also mean sitting back and letting the relationship develop naturally.

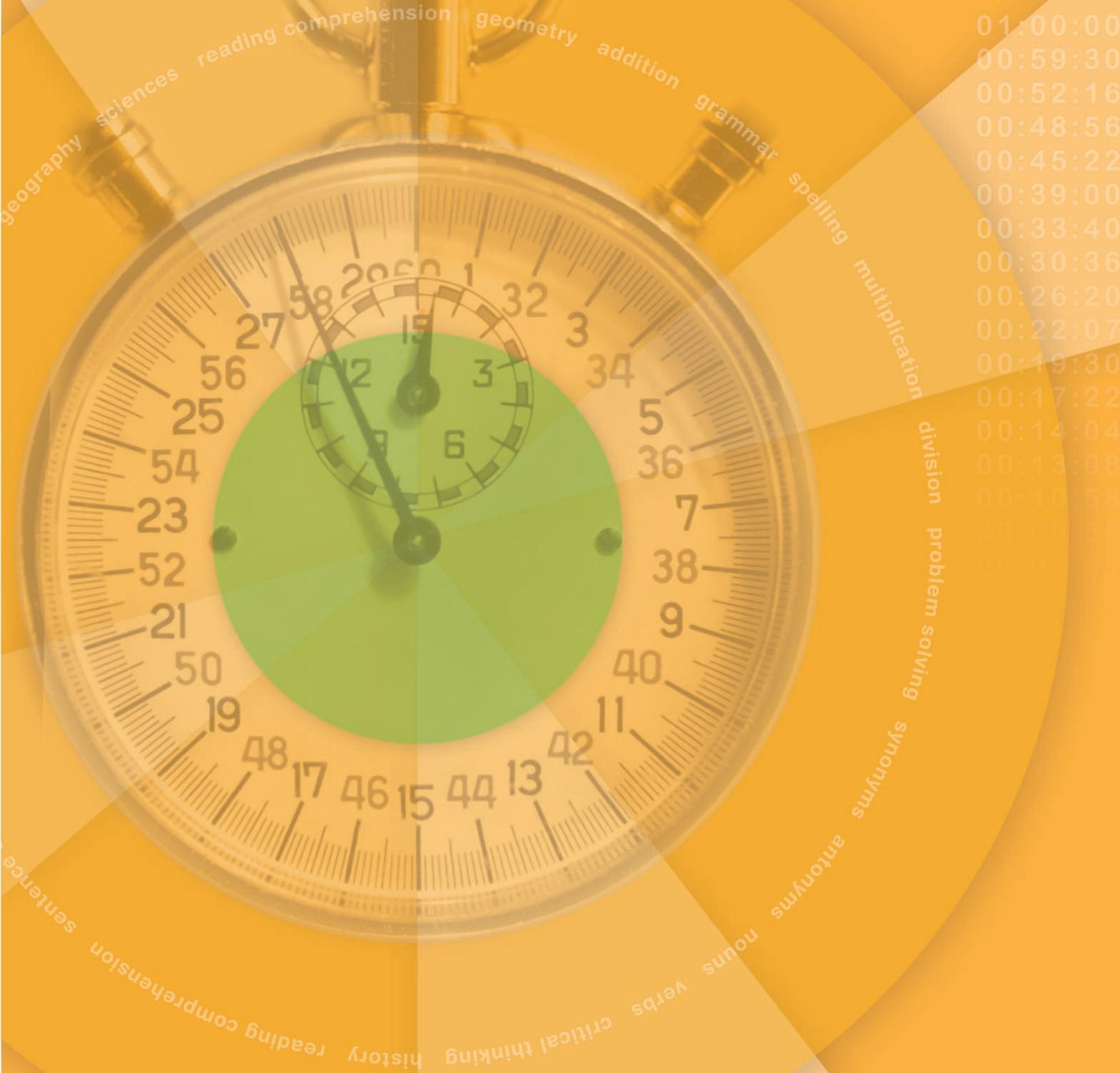
Tutors should be **honest and forthright** with members, modeling humility and feeling free to admit when they do not know something. When they are unsure about an answer, tutors should work with the teen, brainstorm and find the right answer. If an unfamiliar place name is mentioned – tutors should consult the globe or atlas or encyclopedia. If a tutor does not know a word, he should look it up. Tutors may need to re-read a lesson several times in order to better understand math or science concepts. In being persistent, tutors are not only helping teens, but also they are modeling the strength of **perseverance** and the importance of **effort**.

Although the development of a good relationship between tutors and teens – one that is full of trust and respect – is important, keep in mind that the goal for teens in the program is the same for all other members: **getting homework completed**. Tutors need to keep members on task: the work comes first and is always the ultimate goal of each and every session.

Powerful Idea

You may want to have teens keep track of their points using a “checkbook” format. Help them draw up a sample checkbook register (or see if a local banks will donate them), and use them to manage the points they have earned. Members “deposit” all their points into a checkbook at the end of the week, and write a “check” when they spend their points. Teens learn to feel comfortable using a checkbook while they get practice in record-keeping skills.





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geography sciences reading comprehension geometry addition grammar spelling multiplication division problem solving synonyms nouns verbs critical thinking history reading comprehension sentence



Remember that Power Hour encompasses two distinct programs. The primary component of Power Hour is the after-school **homework assistance** provided to a large group of members in the learning center, overseen by a staff member or volunteer.

Depending on the needs of your members, your Club also may want to implement the **tutoring program**.

The tutoring component pairs tutors to work one-on-one with members in order to provide more focused, personalized assistance.¹⁸

This section provides additional information to help you implement a tutoring program and make it effective for your members.

When to Use Tutors

Many members will best thrive in a one-on-one dynamic.

Especially for the population of children who do not receive enough **attention and responsiveness** at home, a tutor provides attention, tailored instruction and a positive role model.¹⁹

Working with a tutor need not be a permanent arrangement. A good student may be having an especially hard time with geometry, for example, and the normal Power Hour program is not providing the help she needs. A tutor could help her strictly with geometry work. After a number of one-on-one sessions, the member may overcome the obstacles and understand the material on her own. At that point, the tutoring sessions are no longer necessary, and she can now return to participating only in the Power Hour group homework sessions.

Introducing Members, Tutors and Parents

Once you have assigned a tutor to a member, arrange a time when the tutor and the member's parents or guardians can meet **face to face**. Some

Clubs encourage parents and tutors to exchange phone numbers. This reinforces the connection and lets them experience a sense of **partnership** in the education of the member. This meeting gives parents a chance to get to know the person who will be assisting their child. At the same time, members can meet the tutors who will be assisting them and get to know them a bit better. Clubs may want to encourage tutors to use the questions listed below to help tutors and the members they are helping get to know each other better (a handout with a list of the questions can be downloaded from the Power Hour page of the Web site).

At this point, many Clubs also ask parents, members and tutors to sign a contract (a sample contract can be downloaded from the Power Hour page of the Web site) to identify the areas of need for the member and to gain a commitment from the tutor to help in these areas.

Member/Tutor “Getting to Know You” Questions

Members and tutors

- ✦ What are some things you like to do?
- ✦ What are some things you do well?
- ✦ What is one of your life goals?
- ✦ If you could visit any place, where would it be?
- ✦ What is your favorite book?
- ✦ What is your favorite food?
- ✦ Where were you born?

Members only

- ✦ What do you want to do/be when you grow up?
- ✦ What is your favorite school subject?
- ✦ What is your least favorite school subject?

Tutors only

- ✦ What do you do at work and/or school?

Clubs can access the “Member/Tutor ‘Getting to Know You’ Questions” and the “Tutoring Contract” by visiting the B&GCA Web site at www.bgca.net. Go to the program page, and click on *Power Hour* to find the appropriate forms.

Where to Locate Tutoring Sessions

If possible, it is a good idea to try to find a separate area in the Club for the one-on-one tutoring sessions.

This can be an **informal space** – perhaps in the corner of the learning center or sitting under a tree near an outdoor recreation area. Because the tutor and member spend a lot of time talking aloud to one another, you can avoid the potential for distraction to other members by locating tutoring sessions in an area that is somewhat separate from (but still visible to) the larger group.

You and your tutors can be extremely creative in finding unique and inspiring locations for tutoring sessions. For example, at one Boston-area Club, tutors who work in the Attorney General’s office take members in a group (accompanied by staff members) to study in the luxury boxes of Boston College’s sports arena.

Permission for Tutors

Your Club probably has special permission slips for occasions when volunteers or tutors need to take members off-site. Remember to get all necessary permissions. You should also advise your tutors of related liability issues. In order to avoid potential problems, tutors should never be alone with members in a one-on-one situation – there must always be other members and/or other staff present.

How a Tutoring Session Should Function

Tutoring sessions usually take place during the same hours as Power Hour,

but many Clubs allow tutors and the members with whom they work to **set their own schedules**. This flexibility is often beneficial because it maximizes the amount of time tutors can work with members.

Tutoring is ideal when it is conducted **one-on-one** with a member. But tutors can also be of great benefit to small groups of two to four members, as long as those in the group are in the same grade and ideally, the same classes.

Tutoring sessions can vary depending on the needs of the member and the creative approach of the tutor, but most tutoring sessions will have the following steps in common. Feel free to modify or add to this list in order to better meet the needs of your Club members.

Tips for Tutors

1. **Remind member** the day before and the day of the tutoring session.
2. Make sure the **member has checked** in with the Power Hour Coordinator and been signed in on the day’s Check-In Sheet.
3. Make sure that the member fully **understands the day’s assignments**. Ask members to explain assignments in their own words. The simple act of rephrasing the assignment is a good gauge of a member’s comprehension.

4. Even if the member is working quietly and independently, do not walk away and look for other things to do. You might not be aware of how much your simple presence is **helping the member to focus** and work diligently.
5. When a member asks you a question and you know the answer, do not simply give the reply. Help the **member to reason it out**, but do not make it into a guessing game. Try to gauge the member's level of frustration.
6. When a member asks a question and you do not know the answer, freely admit this. Let him see that you too can be stumped at times. This models humility. The next step is modeling **problem-solving and research skills**. Sit down beside the member and re-read the problem. **Brainstorm ideas** for solving the problem out loud. Your first attempt to get it right might not be successful, and this is part of the process a tutor models for a member. If you go to a dictionary or atlas, try to let the member do the work of looking things up in the index and finding the page. His research skills will improve over time, just as sports abilities improve. Eventually, members become more adept, quick and intuitive in knowing what reference materials to reach for.
7. Check on members' **time management and organizational skills**, addressing these issues as necessary. Help members keep their folders and backpack organized. Once an assignment is completed, it should put where it belongs, so it will be ready to turn in the next day.
8. Recommend **breaks and breathers** when necessary. Do not say these breaks are rewards for working – it is important not to create a negative association for homework assignments. Instead, let her know that breaks improve productivity.²⁰
9. Keep a careful record of **observations of attitudes, behavior and performance** on the back of the Check-in Sheet.
10. At the end of the session, turn in the **Check-in Sheet** to the Power Hour Coordinator, who transfers the information to the Master Tracker and the Power Recorder.
11. Stay in open areas where you and the Club member are **visible to others**. If possible, work together with other tutor pairs.
12. Remember to **have fun!**

Reading Tips for Tutors

Especially with younger members, most homework assignments will involve

reading. There are many approaches to helping members with reading skills – reading to a member, reading with a member, taking turns reading with a member, having the member read aloud or having the member read silently and then summarize what he has read. This section gives tutors specific tips and guidance for making the most of reading sessions with members.

How to Teach Reading Skills Sequentially

1. Decoding Skills (sounding out)

- ✦ Phonetic: identifying consonant sounds in the beginning, middle and end of words; looking for consonant blends and long and short vowel sounds;
- ✦ Structural: looking for roots, prefixes, suffixes and compound words and dividing by syllables and accents.

2. Vocabulary Skills

- ✦ Root work interpretations (e.g., for the word *joyously*, look at the root, *joy*);
- ✦ Suffix/prefixes and how they may change meanings;
- ✦ Word origins;
- ✦ Multiple meanings;
- ✦ Synonyms, antonyms and homonyms;
- ✦ Use of references (e.g., dictionary, thesaurus and encyclopedia);
- ✦ Use of context for definitions/comprehension;
- ✦ Word substitutions.

3. Comprehension Skills

- ✦ Reading for main idea (topic sentence, signal words, etc.);
- ✦ Reading for detail;
- ✦ Detecting patterns of organization (e.g., fact vs. opinion, compare/contrast and time sequence);
- ✦ Recall;
- ✦ Study skills;
- ✦ Reading to follow directions;
- ✦ Skimming;
- ✦ Finding helpful information (e.g., table of contents, index, almanacs, encyclopedias, dictionaries, maps, tables, charts and graphs);
- ✦ Outlining;
- ✦ Summarizing;
- ✦ Using the library/Internet.

4. Reading Skills

- ✦ Reading for detail vs. skimming;
- ✦ Drawing conclusions;
- ✦ Determining the author's point of view;
- ✦ Detecting propaganda;
- ✦ Forecasting outcomes;
- ✦ Making generalizations;
- ✦ Making comparisons;
- ✦ Analyzing;
- ✦ Elaborating (finishing a story);
- ✦ Reading for recreation vs. reading for information.



Tips For Reading Tutors

A Department of Education publication – “Tips for Reading Tutors” – offers general reading tips in English and Spanish. This publication, and others, is available through the Web site at www.ed.gov.

Making the Most of Reading a Story or Book

1. Pre-Reading

- ✦ *Does the title give clues to what the story is about?*
- ✦ *Do the pictures give clues to what the story is about?*
 - ◆ *What do you think the story is about?*
 - ◆ *Where do you think the story takes place?*
 - ◆ *Does this story look funny, scary, happy? Why?*

2. Reading

- ✦ Take turns so members do not get tired.
- ✦ Stop to ask questions, as needed, to help members understand the plot.
- ✦ Note all words members do not know. If they pause at a word, do not jump in. Are they trying to sound it out? How do they try to solve the word problem? After a few seconds, help with the word and record for review at the end of reading time.
- ✦ Ask comprehension questions that include:
 - ◆ questions about the action;
 - ◆ questions about characters and their characteristics, feelings and/or consequences of their actions;
 - ◆ questions about setting and possible implications of location;
 - ◆ recall questions about specific events in the story;
 - ◆ recall questions about numbers, sequence of events, people, etc.
 - ◆ inference and judgment questions based on story facts. Questions may include cause and effect topics, as well as questions requiring inference about characters' emotions or reactions.

3. Post-Reading

- ✦ Discuss what happened in the story.
- ✦ Go back, as necessary, to find proof of what happened or settle a disagreement.
- ✦ Review pre-reading discussion. Was it on target?



Reading Tips

- ✦ Choose books that are not too easy or too hard.
- ✦ Take turns reading. Read a page, then allow members to read a page.
- ✦ Use a dramatic voice as you read. If the character in the book is angry, use an angry voice. If the character is scared, use a frightened voice.
- ✦ Stop every few pages and ask questions to ensure members understand the story. Involve them in the story by asking them to predict what will happen next.
- ✦ Be encouraging when members are reading. Help them sound out words.
- ✦ If reading with a group, talk about being encouraging and respectful of reading skills and levels before beginning. Do not tolerate disrespectful behavior.
- ✦ Go back and review words members did not know. Offer praise if they remember.
- ✦ When you finish reading, ask members about their favorite parts of the book.
- ✦ If you read with certain members regularly, re-visit books you have read before. Repetition is good for readers.
- ✦ Have fun and be creative!

When a Tutor-Member Pairing is Not Working

You might find it necessary, or tempting, from time to time to switch pairings of tutors and members. Try to

resist switching, unless it is absolutely necessary. All pairings should be given time and patience, and a chance to develop into a **positive working relationship**. If the relationship does not develop and the tutor-member pair is not working, you may have to assign a new tutor.

If a change in tutor is necessary, it is very important that the member not feel as if he or she is being rejected by the tutor and passed along to someone else. He or she must **never feel unwanted**. In addition, the tutors themselves should not be made to feel as if they have failed. By keeping a light attitude when making changes, neither tutors nor members should feel any particular stress.



General Tutoring Tips

The following suggestions help prioritize tutoring, since time is limited. Certain things should be included each week.

- ✦ Help Club members with current homework problems, even if it takes most of your time.
- ✦ Encourage members to bring in corrected homework so you may review together and, if appropriate, members may brag about what they have done well.
- ✦ Try to teach a new skill, or reinforce those recently taught.
- ✦ Use games to review learned skills or as a fun, tutoring-time break.
- ✦ Work from known to unknown in small, simple steps, making sure members understand before proceeding.

Ongoing Development for Tutors

In addition to showing appreciation to tutors, some Clubs also have been able to offer them additional

training and development to enhance their work with youth. By including Power Hour tutors in Club professional development opportunities or providing workshops specifically designed for tutors, Clubs can motivate them and help them do even better work with Club members. Some ideas for tutor development include:

- ✦ Ask a teacher or reading specialist at your local school to spend an hour talking to tutors about how to help youth who struggle with reading.
- ✦ Have your teen director present information to tutors about the special needs and interests of teens at your Club.
- ✦ Locate a collection of fun math games (either from library or online resources) and conduct a workshop – using the games – to encourage tutors to think about ways to make math fun during tutoring sessions.
- ✦ Arrange a member-tutor spelling bee, and allow tutors to run the event (with your oversight and assistance).
- ✦ Demonstrate for tutors how to make and use flashcards (see page 21), as a way to prepare and train them for using flashcards with members.

Once you begin to think about ongoing development for tutors, you will be able to find countless ways to help them learn even more about assisting youth with schoolwork.



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 division problem solving synonyms
 nouns verbs critical thinking history reading comprehension sentence
 antonyms

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Challenges to Successful Homework Completion

In today's world of national educational standards, classrooms are increasingly becoming controlled, predictable

environments. Once a student leaves school, however, the environment rapidly becomes clouded with friends, siblings, parents, an empty house, video games, television, the Internet, gangs, sports, drugs, the mall, fast food joints and countless other factors vying for the student's attention.

Students often complain about homework: that it is too difficult; that they have too much work; there is no good place to work; there is not enough time to complete it; the instructions are unclear. These frustrations are in turn echoed by parents, who do not have the time or resources to keep up with the growing after-school demands on their children's time²¹

Some of the greatest challenges to successful homework completion include:

Other Demands on Students' Time. Whether watching television or working at an after-school job, many activities compete with homework for students' afternoons and evenings.

After-school Jobs. Even an after-school job – a positive and often necessary factor in the lives of teens – can keep older students from completing their daily obligations. According to a U.S. Department of Education publication, most high school seniors allocated little time to homework, fewer than five hours a week, and the majority, 77 percent, reported working several hours at a paid or volunteer job during the school year. This research shows “an inverse relationship between hours spent working and hours devoted to homework.” In 1998, high school seniors were more likely to do no homework or to spend four or fewer hours a week on homework as their job hours increased.

Negative Attitude Toward Homework. Another important factor is a negative attitude toward homework. In interviews, children regularly describe homework as tedious, boring, lonely and pointless.

Lack of Motivation. Perhaps the most common trait among children who do not successfully complete assignments is a pronounced lack of motivation. There comes a time when children begin to perceive that other students are thriving. They label themselves as failures and quietly resign from their studies, telling themselves that school is fine for some, but not for them.²²

Especially in challenged families and neighborhoods, even young children observe the failures of older teens and young adults. They quickly draw the conclusion – even if they cannot put it in words – that the world is not a level playing field.²³

Emotional or Social Problems. This type of withdrawal and retreat can also be caused by substance abuse, social isolation and parental indifference. Another major cause of homework difficulties is a struggle with emotional problems such as anxiety, depression, aggression, compulsion or anti-social behaviors. Even a very bright child may complain that the work is boring and a “waste of time.”

Learning Disabilities. Some students are further hampered by a learning disability, the most commonly cited being hyperactivity. A short attention span and ready distractibility, coupled with poor academic performance, are the hallmarks of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). After professional assessment, and possible medication, additional adjustments can be made to assist the child in overcoming this barrier to homework success.

Lack of Skills. Difficulties in homework completion are also often linked to a lack of good, clear organizational skills. Teachers and parents sometimes report that children with homework problems are unable to write down assignments correctly, establish goals, set priorities or manage their time efficiently. Being organized is most important for completing book reports, science fair projects, term papers and other assignments that are done over a period of time.

Absence of Support. Many of these problems originate in the home where an absence of nurturing parental support can produce feelings of ambiguity, passivity, negativity or downright hostility in young learners. Parents who fail to interact positively with their children sometimes pave the way for underachievement. Even some bright children underachieve to get the attention of parents who are preoccupied with careers or social engagements.

Attitudes of Peers. The last, but equally important, challenge to successful homework completion is the negative attitude of one's peers toward homework. Such peer pressure affects children in two ways: it can goad a child into engaging in destructive behaviors; but it can just as easily dissuade a child from engaging in positive behaviors, such as the completion of homework assignments. When classmates regard homework as a waste of time, many others in the group will take on a similar posture, seeing those who do their homework as "nerds" or "losers."

Taken together, all of the above forces and obstacles present a formidable barrier to productive learning and successful homework completion.

Case Studies of Effective Programs

California

The Treasure Island Boys and Girls Club in San Francisco runs a mandatory

Power Hour program for all members except teens. They use an Excel spreadsheet to keep track of Power Points. They award points only for attending the program – one point per day. But for each of these points, members receive a raffle ticket. By Friday, members could have as many as four raffle tickets, enabling them to win prizes in each Friday's raffle.

When a member finishes his homework, he gets a stamp on his hand, which gains him access to the other programs in the Club, plus a snack as an added bonus. The food bank donates bananas and granola bars.

When older members finish their work early, they are encouraged to spend their time tutoring younger members, thereby developing good leadership skills.

The Club keeps a good supply of "fun" money on hand to help members practice counting and other math skills. Members seem to enjoy handling the money.

Massachusetts

The Colonel Daniel Marr Boys and Girls Club has 30 volunteers working in its Power Hour program, Monday through Friday. Many of their volunteers are from the Attorney General's Office. The volunteers function as tutors; each tutor signs a contract with a member and that member's parent or guardian to affirm their collective commitment to the program.

Twice a week, the volunteers take the members to study in luxury boxes at Boston College's sports arena.

The Club always has tutors meet parents – even if just for a few minutes – so the parents know who the tutor is. Parents and tutors also exchange phone numbers to reinforce the sense of teamwork.

Teens do not participate in the Power Hour program, but rather in a special program called College Bound, which also provides homework help and time to study for standardized tests. Teens earn points, which allow them to travel out of state on various programs.

At the end of each year, during the Club's awards ceremony, there are many awards specifically for members in the Power Hour program such as "most progress" and "top boy and girl in a Homework Help program." This ceremony is extremely well attended – the staff even sends out invitations to the parents of all members.

Within Power Hour, there is also a special focus on reading. Members set goals to increase their reading level, or to decrease the length of time it takes them to read a book. Over a five-month period, they had a group goal of members collectively reading 5,000 pages – the members succeeded, and were treated to a field trip.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston has a comprehensive strategy for homework help and tutoring for Club members ages 6 to 18 years. Homework help is available after school each day, and those members who request a tutor are assigned to work one-on-one with a volunteer each week. When members become teens, the tutoring also can develop into more of a mentoring relationship. Young people learn – from volunteer tutors at the Club – about careers, the importance of education for success after graduation and the realities of college. When Club members become sophomores, they can participate in the College Club, which meets weekly to assist members with each step of the college admission process. Members receive SAT preparation, attend college tours, complete applications, financial aid forms and scholarship applications, write essays, get advice on which college to choose and prepare to make the transition from high school to college. College Club alumni return to the Club to talk about their experiences in college and to encourage members to consider higher education.

North Carolina

Boys & Girls Club of Nash/Edgecombe Counties breaks up its Power Hour sessions into age groups. The 10-year-olds get a session just for themselves because there is a large number of 5th graders in the program. The Club strives to keep the helper-to-member ratio at 1:15 or better.

Teens in the program use their Power Points toward different awards than the younger members do. Teens can use points for field trips, college tours or sporting events. For example, teens in the program recently attended a UNC-Chapel Hill girls' basketball game.

Members earn points based on the number of assignments finished, but also earn points for every 20 minutes of reading, being well-behaved, staying on task or working together cooperatively. The Club also awards points for writing – even writing a letter to a friend can earn a member Power Points.

Oregon

At the Boys & Girls Club of Emerald Valley, members work on their homework in “The Brain Zone,” a learning center filled with educational games and computers. In this Club, members do not earn Power Points. Instead, they must attend Power Hour a minimum of fifteen days in order to attend a big monthly pizza party. The Club also has a prize cabinet filled with appealing incentives. Sometimes, the three members who worked the hardest on a given day are allowed to go to the prize cabinet and claim a reward.

Utah

The Lincoln Center Boys & Girls Club runs a mandatory Power Hour program. The Club offers a Homework Café, the Amazon Library, a Mentoring Program and a lab for computer work. Because it is a mandatory program and nothing else happens while Power Hour is in session, the Club has an enormous staff to help members with their homework. On a typical day, this Club has a remarkable number of helpers – 35 volunteers and eight staff members.

The Club finds many great teen tutors at the community service and outreach clubs in the local high schools. It also has a number of retired persons working as volunteers. Because the Lincoln Center Club has such a rich group of dedicated helpers, it spends a lot of time on training volunteers.

From time to time, members get to go on educational field trips to a fire station, a living maze or a local museum.



geography sciences reading comprehension geometry addition grammar spelling multiplication division problem solving synonyms antonyms nouns verbs critical thinking history reading comprehension sentence

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Web Sites for Worksheets

EdHelper – Thousands of activity worksheets,
<http://www.edhelper.com/>.

Enchanted Learning – Downloadable worksheets, interactive activities and lessons on a variety of topics,
<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/Home.html>.

The Fractions Learning Units – Math worksheets from NSA's Mathematics Education Partnership,
<http://www.nsa.gov/programs/mepp/esfrac.html>.

Learning Planet – A collection of worksheets covering every subject area,
<http://www.learningplanet.com/index.asp>.

RHL School – Free worksheets and resources in reading and math, <http://www.rhlschool.com/>.

School Express – Downloadable worksheets for every subject area, <http://www.schoolexpress.com/>.

Schoolhouse Technologies – Worksheets for math, reading and basic skills,
<http://www.schoolhousetech.com/>.

TampaRead's – Hundreds of free reading and phonics worksheets, <http://www.tampareads.com/>.

Teach-Nology – Worksheets, lesson plans and evaluations of other educational websites,
<http://www.teach-nology.com/>.

Worksheets for Teachers – Links to sources for free worksheets on the Web,
<http://www.hptcb.org/cogelia/worksheets.htm>.

Homework Help on the Web

Ask Jeeves™ Kids – A site that answers specific questions and allows access to several “books” for study help in different areas,
<http://www.ajkids.com>.

Big Chalk: The Education Network – Offers practical advice, such as note-taking skills and information about getting into colleges, in addition to more focused homework assistance, <http://www.bigchalk.com>.

Homework Help – A site from the About network offering links to homework assistance sites, along with tips and articles, organized by subject and grade,
<http://homeworkhelp.about.com/>.

Homework Relief Center – A site for parents offering guidelines and practice sheets for helping children with homework, <http://homeworkreliefcenter.com/hrc/>.

Infoplease.com – Features a Homework Center, a section for parents, one for teachers and a reference section for kids, <http://www.infoplease.com>.

KidSpace at the Internet Public Library – A general collection of information with lots of reference materials, <http://www.ipl.org/div/kidspace/>.

math.comSM – Homework help, practice, calculators and games on a variety of math subjects,
<http://www.math.com>.

My Homework Helper – A collection of links from [refdesk.com](http://www.refdesk.com), offering pages by subject matter or grade level, <http://www.refdesk.com/homework.html>.

PlaneMath – A site offering math skills using examples from the world of aerospace, developed by NASA,
<http://www.planemath.com>.

TeenSpace at the Internet Public Library – A site similar to KidSpace geared especially to the needs of teens, <http://www.ipl.org/div/teen/>.

Skill Development on the Web

A+ Math – Games and quizzes for basic skills, <http://www.aplusmath.com/>.

AAA Math – Hundreds of pages of math skill drills, arranged by grade level and type of math, <http://www.aaamath.com/>.

Alfy.com – A collection of fun games to drill basic skills with younger children, http://www.alfy.com/brain_train/.

Brain Boosters – An archive of puzzles and skill tests from Discovery.com, <http://school.discovery.com/brainboosters/>.

The Grammar Gorillas – A site offering practice in parts of speech, <http://www.funbrain.com/grammar/index.html>.

Jayzee Bear USA Map Game – A map game for learning all of the states interactively, <http://www.jayzeebear.com/map/usa.html>.

Learning Caliber – A collection of games for practicing basic skills in a variety of subjects, <http://www.learning.caliberinc.com/games.html>.

maps.com – A collection of geography tests, <http://www.maps.com/learn/games/>.

Math Archives – A list of math drill sites for practice in basic math skills, <http://archives.math.utk.edu/topics/arithmetric.html>.

Math Baseball – Practice in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division on the baseball diamond, <http://www.funbrain.com/math/index.html>.

teachervision.com – Online games and resources, including homework help, <http://www.teachervision.com/lesson-plans/lesson-5816.html>.

Vocabulary University – Vocabulary and grammar puzzles, <http://www.vocabulary.com/>.

Web Sites For Tutoring

Project First: Fostering Reading Through Science and Technology – A helpful

list of guidelines for tutoring in the areas of reading and science, <http://www.eyeonthesky.org>.

Inexpensive Software Titles

Many of the following titles are available in several versions, specific to age or grade level.

Math

Achieve! Math & Science (The Learning Company)

Arthur's Math Games (The Learning Company)

Blue's Clues 123 Time Activities (Humongous Entertainment)

Disney's Winnie the Pooh: 123's (Disney Interactive)

Math Blaster (Knowledge Adventure)

Math Express (Encore Software)

Reader Rabbit Math Adventure Ages (The Learning Company)

Schoolhouse Rock: Math Rock! (The Learning Company)

Sesame Street Numbers (Softkey Incorporated)

Reading

Achieve! Phonics, Reading & Writing (The Learning Company)

Arthur's Reading Games (The Learning Company)

Blues Clues ABC Time Activities (Infogames Entertainment)

Clifford The Big Red Dog Reading (Scholastic)

Curious George Reading and Phonics (Knowledge Adventure)

Disney's Winnie the Pooh: ABC's (Disney Interactive)

Reader Rabbit (The Learning Company)

Reading Blaster (Knowledge Adventure)

Schoolhouse Rock: Grammar Rock! (The Learning Company)

Word Munchers Deluxe (Softkey Incorporated)

Zoboomafoo Alphabet (The Learning Company)

Thinking Skills

- Adiboo: Discover Mazes, Numbers & Puzzles* (Knowledge Adventure)
- Arthur's Thinking Games* (The Learning Company)
- Carmen Sandiego's Think Quick Challenge* (The Learning Company)
- Curious George Downtown Adventure* (Knowledge Adventure)
- I Spy Series* (Scholastic)
- KidsEdge* (The Learning Company)
- Muppet Kids Thinking Skills* by Victory Technology
- PlayZone!* (Knowledge Adventure)
- Reader Rabbit: Thinking Adventures* (The Learning Company)
- Strategy Challenges Collection* (The Learning Company)
- Thinkin' Things Galactic Brain* (The Learning Company)
- Zoombinis Logical Journey* (The Learning Company)

Software for Teens

- Algebra 1* (The Learning Company)
- Algebra 2* (The Learning Company)
- Ancient Civilizations* (Entrex)
- Geometry* (The Learning Company)
- Math Review* (The Learning Company)
- Mind Power Math: High School* (The Learning Company)
- Ramagon Interactive Construction Kit* (El-Ko Interaction, Inc.)
- Sim City™ 4* (Electronic Arts, Inc.)
- Virtual Physics: Escape from Brain Death* (Cubic Science, Inc.)
- Virtual Physics: The Eggs of Time* (Cubic Science, Inc.)

Books of Puzzles

25 Super Cool Math Board Games
(Grades 3-6), Lorraine Hopping Egan.

Activities For Fast Finishers:

Vocabulary: 50 Reproducible Puzzles, Brain Teasers, and Other Awesome Activities That Kids Can Do On Their Own – and Can't Resist, Marc Nobleman.

Best-Ever Vocabulary & Word Study Games (Grades 4-8), Lorraine Hopping Egan.

Children's Word Games and Crossword Puzzles for Ages 7-9, Eugene Maleska and Ruth Fecych, editors.

The Dell Book of Logic Problems, Rosalind Moore.

English Teachers Book of Instant Word Games, Ruth Rice.

The Everything Kids' Puzzle Book, Jennifer A. Ericsson, Beth L. Blair.

The Everything Kids' Mazes Book: Twist, Squirm, and Wind Your Way Through Subways, Museums, Monster Lairs, and Tombs, Beth L. Blair.

The Everything Kids' Monsters Book: From Ghosts, Goblins, and Gremlins to Vampires, Werewolves, and Zombies: Puzzles, Games, and Trivia Guaranteed to Keep You Up at Night, Shannon R. Turlington, Cheryl Kimball, Christel A. Shea.

The Everything Kids Space Book: All About Rockets, Moon Landings, Mars, and More Plus Space Activities You Can Do at Home!, Kathiann M. Kowalski.

Games Magazine Big Book of Games, Ronnie Shushan, editor.

Games Magazine Junior Kids' Big Book of Games, Karen C. Anderson, editor.

Games Magazine Presents the Kids' Giant Book of Games, Karen C. Anderson, editor.

Grammar Puzzles & Games Kids Can't Resist!
(Grades 3-6), Karen Kellaheer.

Great American History Games, Louise Spigarelli and Lorraine Hopping Egan.

Great Word Search Puzzles for Kids, Mark Danna.

Inventors and Inventions (Grades 4-8), Lorraine Hopping Egan.

Noun Hounds and Other Great Grammar Games
(Grades 3-6), Lorraine Hopping Egan.

Outrageous Crossword Puzzle and Word Game Book for Kids, by Helene Hovanec and Will Shortz.

Puzzle Pack for Kids, Philip Carter, Ken Russell.

Sports Illustrated For Kids: MVP Sports Puzzles, Brad Henoy.



Project Learn Outcome Model

Inputs	Program Activities	Program Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✦ Staff members✦ Time spent with children✦ Learning Center resources (i.e. computers, books, magazines, tables, chairs, software)✦ Funding (including in-kind donations)✦ Volunteer hours✦ Project Learn training✦ Professional development for all Club staff✦ Ongoing technical assistance from B&GCA national office✦ Program needs assessment and resource development plan✦ Bright, clean dynamic learning center✦ Non-BGCA sponsored training and conferences attended by Club staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✦ Homework help and tutoring✦ High yield learning activities and programs✦ Parental and adult involvement✦ Collaboration with schools✦ Recognition and incentives✦ Goals for Graduation✦ B&GCA programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✦ Attendance of members in homework help and tutoring sessions✦ Number of high-yield learning activities✦ Number of parent and adult activities✦ Attendance of parents, relatives, and other adults who are significant in the lives of Club members✦ Number of program volunteers✦ Funds for learning resources✦ Attendance in learning center activities

Outcomes for Members

Initial Outcomes

- ✦ Club members will spend more time studying.
- ✦ Club members will complete and pass in more homework assignments.
- ✦ Club members will engage in more high-yield learning activities.
- ✦ Club members will have fun learning.

Intermediate Outcomes

- ✦ Club members' grades will improve.
- ✦ Club members will have fewer absences.
- ✦ Club members will have fewer behavioral problems.
- ✦ Club members will become confident learners.
- ✦ Club members will demonstrate goal setting and time management skills.
- ✦ Members will independently pursue learning activities.

Long-term Outcomes

- ✦ Club members will be proficient in basic academic disciplines.
- ✦ Club members will be proficient in the use of technology.
- ✦ Club members will graduate from high school and make good post-secondary school choices.
- ✦ Club members become intrinsically motivated life-long learners.

Outcomes for Staff

Initial Outcomes

- ✦ Staff will understand the importance of working with parents, teachers, and schools to support Club members' educational growth.
- ✦ Staff will understand how activities throughout the Club can support members' success in school.
- ✦ Staff will plan and carry out high-yield learning activities in their Club program areas.

Intermediate Outcomes

- ✦ Staff will view education efforts as everyone's responsibility and work as a team to support members' educational growth.
- ✦ Staff will have a deeper knowledge of their members' academic needs.

Long-term Outcomes

- ✦ The Club will be a place where everyone values and supports education.
- ✦ Staff will establish and maintain relationships with key community stakeholders in order to sustain Club goals.
- ✦ All staff will view themselves as partners in the education of Club members.

Outcomes for Community

Initial Outcomes

- ✦ Teachers, administrators, and school officials will understand the goals of Project Learn and the Club's overall youth development strategy.
- ✦ Increased parental and adult participation in club programs.
- ✦ New and/or improved relationships with local schools.
- ✦ Increased number of family support programs and activities.

Intermediate Outcomes

- ✦ Schools will begin to work with the Club and share information about members' educational progress.
- ✦ Clubs will secure in-kind donations and community resources to support their education programming.

Long-term Outcomes

- ✦ Community stakeholders will endorse Club goals.
- ✦ Parents will stress the value of education to their children.
- ✦ Teachers and community members will view the Club as a key partner in the education of Club members.



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