

BROOKLINE HIGH SCHOOL

REMOTE LEARNING: COMMON BEST PRACTICES

At BHS, freedom and responsibility are deeply-held values that sometimes make common practices challenging. These are unprecedented times, however, and it is critical that we establish consistent, clear systems and assignments for our students. The goal of this work is to address the feedback we are hearing that many students are overwhelmed by remote learning. Specifically, we have heard that students are having trouble with having to go to multiple platforms and with keeping track of assignments and meetings.

Teachers, special educators, and administrators formulated these common best practices. Much as we spend a significant amount of time establishing routines at the beginning of the year, it is perhaps even more important right now.

- Post assignments by 9am on Monday and have them due by 5pm on Sunday.
Understand that students want to see a consistent work plan.
- Allow assignments to be submitted at least one week late without a penalty. Clarify with students that they should communicate if they are unable to complete an assignment on time or if they go beyond the recommended time. *Be flexible with student work submission modalities.*
- Use both United Mind Workers and Canvas for landing/entry places for students (and support staff). *Best is a google doc shared at both sites.*
- Plan assignments knowing that students require administrative and executive functioning time that is widely variable. *It is easy to underestimate the time it takes for students to organize and process the tasks that you assign them.*
- Assignment Guidelines:
 - Let students know how long you expect assignments to take. This provides an organizational guideline for students to help them understand the relative weight of the task.
 - Design assignments with two to three steps such as: Read/Watch _____, Do _____, Submit _____.
Clarity and simplicity helps enable students to access assignments and manage their work.
- Announce zoom meetings a week in advance, with a reminder closer to the event.
This helps students organize themselves and ensure there are no surprises.

These guidelines ensure clarity and simplicity for students, without sacrificing rigor. Common best practices will enable all of our students to access our curriculum to the best of their ability in these challenging times.

Practices in Canvas for Teachers

- Break large assignments into smaller pieces.
- Assignment names include due date to reinforce and clarify the dates in the varied ways Canvas displays assignments. (e.g., Assignment 6.1 May 2, Assignment 6.2 May 4, Assignment 6.1 May 5).
- Do not allow students to use free text submission (unless for short discussion threads).
- Use the syllabus as home page which aggregates the assignments, announcements and the big picture expectations all in one spot. Add a hyperlink from there to the google doc.
- Advanced user? Use the Modules function in Canvas as a homepage, or embed a live google doc.

Practices In Canvas and UMW for Students

- Use an organizer (paper or online) to write down times for office hours and other teacher contact opportunities for the week.
- Make a list of all the assignments you have for the week and the time each is estimated to take (times provided by teachers).
- Cut and paste assignments from the list into your schedule for the week. You might choose to focus mostly on one course each day OR spread out the assignments for a course over the week.
- Check Canvas to see if you owe any old assignments; add these to your schedule.
- Look at feedback on work teachers recently evaluated. See if any assignments need to be resubmitted or if you need to contact a teacher about any old assignments.
- Let your teachers know if the assignments take longer than the time they had suggested.