

A Reference Card

The Homework Stall Decoder

Homework doesn't usually get refused outright. It gets stalled: a sudden trip to the bathroom, an urgent snack, a very important story about the bus. Here's what six common stalls are usually about, and the one line that moves each one along.

1	"I need a snack first" (five minutes after the last one) Usually means: Not hungry, just buying time before the hardest part of the day starts on top of an already full one. Say: "Snack at the table, we start together."
2	Suddenly remembers something urgent to tell you Usually means: A genuine bid for connection before being asked to sit and produce something alone. Say: "Tell me while we open the bag."
3	"I don't get it" before even reading the question Usually means: The page looks like more effort than they have left. Say: "Let's just read the first line. That's all."
4	Long bathroom trip Usually means: A few minutes of nobody watching or asking anything of them. Say: "Take your time. I'll have it ready when you're back."
5	Suddenly very tired Usually means: Genuinely low on the kind of energy homework needs. Say: "Ten minutes lying down, then five minutes of work. That's it."

6

Gets angry at the pencil, the page, the desk

Usually means:

The frustration has to land somewhere, and the nearest object is easiest.

Say:

"The pencil's not the problem. Let's find the actual one."

None of these stalls need solving before homework can start.

They just need ten seconds of being seen for what they are.

From the team at Tricky Brains

Helping children build confident, calm and curious minds.