Oral Homework

What?
Using any of a wide range of digital technologies to enable students to record and submit digital recordings of themselves speaking the target language.

Why?
With limited curriculum contact time, such activities can allow students to complete useful additional speaking practice, consolidate classwork and develop oral confidence at their own pace, in a lower-stakes environment away from peers. The format lends itself particularly well to the completion of phonics activities, read aloud tests and oral presentations. Leveraging technology in this way can allow for more extensive practise of the symbol-sound correspondences. Recording spoken homework or "read aloud tests" can also make for more efficient use of class time. For example, rather than the need for 1-1 student-teacher monitoring of a read aloud test in a lesson, students can do this at home or simultaneously in class and the recordings can then be assessed later by the teacher, thus freeing up teaching time. Anecdotally, my experience is that many students can also be further motivated by the chance to use technology outside the classroom.

How?
There are many apps, platforms and combinations that allow for this type of practice. Before setting spoken homework, you will need to carefully explore which method works best in your context, conduct a trial and familiarise yourself thoroughly with the technology so you can support your students effectively. A non-exhaustive range of examples include:

- The new voice record function on the free Padlet mobile app and www.padlet.com (audio is saved directly to your padlet webpage and there are no files to handle).

- Recording on almost any mobile device's native or free voice recording/memo app. MS Powerpoint and OneNote also have inbuilt audio recording. Students then share the audio file:

    o Via a school email address.

    o Via the school's student shared area.

    o Via a homework system such as Microsoft OneNote, Google Schools, Show My Homework or other VLE that may be used in your school.

- Free web-based desktop audio recording facilities are also available such as https://www.speakpipe.com/voice-recorder, from where a link, or file itself, can be shared with the teacher by any of the methods above.

- Flipgrid (video), Seesaw, Class QR & Voicethread are tools also worth exploring.

- For in-class use, a simple Dictaphone, or class tablet could be passed around to students, or invite them to record a spoken activity at a station inside or outside the classroom.

Be Aware!
There are important considerations around equality of access to the requisite technology, especially when working with schools that serve more socio-economically disadvantaged areas. It is important that no students are excluded from the process because they don't have access to the technology. Facilities, support or alternative ways of completing the tasks should be put in place e.g. morning or after school homework clubs, use of a class mobile device, signposting to the library or computer room, suggesting use of a parent's or sibling's phone, placing files in the school's student file server, changing the app or method of submission used, etc. Also check you are GDPR compliant!