

# TIME MANAGEMENT SKILLS

## What work should you be doing each afternoon?

Even if you don't get much homework, it is a good idea to do a set amount of work each night, spacing out what you need to do for school instead of ending up with lots of late nights before assignments and tests.

You should be doing the following:

- Homework from the day at school.
- Working on any assignments that you have been given.
- Studying for any tests that are coming up.
- Organising papers and filing away sheets.
- Working on study notes or summaries

## Create an afternoon routine.

1. De-clutter your workspace before you start. Put away the things you won't need.
2. Decide what you will work on first. Prioritise the work for the evening. What is most important? What order will you do the work in?
3. Then take out the work you will need for the task you are about to start. Some students like to make piles on their bed or the floor for each task they need to do that night.
4. Now decide which approach you will take to planning your time at home:  
OPTION 1: Fixed times allocated to schoolwork often a number of half hour blocks.  
OPTION 2: Each afternoon plan out what you will do for that evening before starting.

## When you feel overwhelmed by your work:

Write out a list of everything you have to do under these headings:

- URGENT: Needs to be done asap.
- COMING UP: Assessments or assignments that you should start preparing for
- POSTPONE: Things that you simply don't have enough time for now and can be left for later

Take the urgent tasks and fill up in your diary when you will do them. Review this list regularly.

## Techniques for Prioritising

*First step for all techniques: Write down absolutely everything you need to do.*

*Then try one of the techniques below.*

### A Simple To Do List

- Do not make the list unrealistic or it will just make you feel stressed and discouraged.
- Overestimate the time needed for each task (everything always takes longer than you think).
- Highlight the most essential and most urgent tasks.

### Rule of Three Technique

- Circle the top 3 tasks that need to be done. What is most important and most urgent?
- Put them in order from 1 to 3.
- Start at the first task and complete it before moving onto the second.

### CULL Technique

- This involves first making a list of everything you need to do then labeling each item as follows:  
C: critical, U: urgent, L: later, L: lose it
- Critical tasks are ones that require your immediate focus. Urgent tasks are those that will require your attention in the next few days. Once you have your priorities, focus only on the C tasks till these are complete and then move to the U tasks. Once all C and U tasks are completed, go through and again re-rank your list and you will find you now have a new set of C and U tasks to work on.

### Setting Specific Time Limits

- Before you are about to start a task, estimate how long it will take to do it, and set yourself a time limit. If you put a bit of time pressure on yourself you will be less likely to be bored.

### Radial Pile Technique

Another variation on this technique is to create a 'radial pile' around your desk at home. You take each piece of work or something that represents the work (like the textbook where the questions are that you have to do) and place it on the floor so there is a visual reminder of everything that needs to be done.

### Split Lists

Fold a piece of paper in half. On one side write 'Priority 1 – Must Complete ASAP'. On the other side write 'Priority 2 – Less Urgent Work'. Think about one subject at a time then work through all your subjects. Now focus on the Priority 1 List and order and number these tasks in order of importance. Start working through the list based on the rankings. Do not do anything on the Priority 2 list until everything on the Priority 1 list is completed.

### Rock, Pebble, Sand

If you do the big tasks first (the rocks), you will find time for the smaller tasks (the pebbles) and you'll easily sprinkle in the sand (the little fiddly things). So if you deal with the rocks first you'll actually still find time for the other tasks to fit around it.

### Using Quadrants

Quadrant 1 – do first: Tasks that are IMPORTANT and URGENT

Quadrant 2 – do second: Tasks that are IMPORTANT but not urgent.

Quadrant 3 – do third: Tasks that are URGENT but not important.

Quadrant 4 – do fourth: Tasks that are not urgent and not important.

### 3D System

- Dump: Can it be dumped? Is it really necessary?

- Do: Can I do it straight away, right here, right now?

- Delay: As a last resort, can I delay it to another appropriate time?

Look through the tasks you need to do that night. Sort them into piles and firstly dump anything that can be dumped. Then decide what you will do that night and what will be delayed (and until when).

### Questioning

Questions to ask yourself when determining priorities.

- How much time do I have available to me?
- Realistically, how long will the tasks I need to do take?
- Which tasks are worrying me the most?
- Which tasks are absolutely critical for me to do well in the subject?
- Which tasks will I learn the most from?
- Which tasks can be postponed to another day without consequences?
- Which tasks have I been putting off because they are unpleasant?

Questions to ask yourself when determining the day's priorities.

- What is definitely due tomorrow?
- What work is expected tomorrow but not actually due?
- What work will I get into trouble for if I don't do it by tomorrow?
- What work should I really complete tonight?
- What work would it be a good idea to knock over tonight?
- What work should I do tonight if I get time?
- What work can be postponed if necessary?



*So what could you do to  
improve the way you manage  
your time?*



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